



# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

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## THESIS

**A BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATERS: THE VITAL  
ROLE OF INTELLIGENCE SHARING IN SHAPING THE  
ANGLO-AMERICAN “SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP”**

by

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December 2008

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INTELLIGENCE SHARING IN SHAPING THE ANGLO-AMERICAN  
“SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP”**

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## ABSTRACT

Speaking to an American audience in 1946, Winston Churchill articulated the British desire for “a special relationship” with America, coining a term which has continued to define the shifting vagaries of collaboration and consonance between the United States and the United Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> Churchill’s statement underscores the historical importance of the Anglo-American relationship, an importance which has translated into unparalleled bilateral security cooperation through two World Wars and a Cold War, during ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, and toward the global security challenges which will doubtless arise in the future. This thesis unpacks the evolution of the “special relationship” in an effort to demonstrate the crucial role of intelligence sharing to the effectiveness of the Anglo-American partnership. Intelligence sharing has been the scaffolding around which the particularity of the “special relationship” has always been constructed, from its inception in World War I until its present-day manifestation, and promises to be the key to the future of this uniquely intimate collaboration. Indeed, intelligence sharing has galvanized the “special relationship” posited by Churchill and its formidable role in world affairs. As the project will argue, maintaining the clear but measured intelligence exchange responsible for the unique character of America’s relationship to the United Kingdom remains vital to shaping the continued effectiveness of the Anglo-American “special relationship.”

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<sup>1</sup> David Dimbleby and David Reynolds. *An Ocean Apart: The Relationship Between Britain and America in the Twentieth Century*. Random House. New York. 1988, 184.

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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION**

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, the subject of intelligence sharing has been the topic of much public scrutiny and debate. While much of the debate has focused on the problem of sharing intelligence within the U.S. Intelligence Community, the international nature of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) and a commensurate level of international cooperation require a focus on maximizing intelligence sharing relationships with foreign allies. Traditionally, America's strongest foreign partnership has been with the United Kingdom; so unique is the place of the U.S.-UK relationship among America's foreign alliances that the relationship has been dubbed "special" by many.

Along with the political, strategic, military, economic, and ideological ties that bind the Anglo-American relationship, a key element to the success of the partnership has been intensive intelligence sharing. The goal of this thesis is to answer the question: what is the significance of intelligence sharing to the Anglo-American "special relationship?" This thesis answers the question by examining the past, present, and future of Anglo-American relations and the vital role of intelligence sharing to the "special relationship" in each timeframe. First, this thesis discusses the critical role intelligence collaboration played in the origin and development of the "special relationship" across the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Second, it examines the importance of U.S.-UK intelligence exchange in the decision to pursue military action in Iraq in 2003. Third, this thesis emphasizes the crucial value of an effective intelligence sharing partnership in the future of the Anglo-American relations as the United Kingdom faces fundamental questions about its allegiances.

This thesis contends that intelligence sharing clarifies the security threat, enabling the pursuit of common policies to counter the mutual threat. Furthermore, this thesis asserts that Anglo-American intelligence cooperation has achieved this threat clarity across time in addressing and securing defeat of mutual enemies throughout U.S.-UK history, in fighting ongoing conflicts, and will continue to be essential to identifying and

confronting mutual threats in the future. This thesis finds that intelligence sharing was vital to the genesis of the Anglo-American “special relationship” and essential to holding the partnership together through times of political strife by providing a baseline for continued trust and stability which remained after the political storms subsided. This thesis also finds that intelligence sharing played a key role in establishing justification for pursuing a military solution to the mutually-perceived threat of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. This thesis concludes that Anglo-American intelligence exchange will continue to operate most effectively if the United States and the United Kingdom maintain a close but measured political distance.

## **B. DEFINITIONS**

The term “intelligence” is utilized in a variety of ways, depending largely on the audience and the context. Even within the loose confines of public policy, “intelligence” is often mistakenly used interchangeably with “information,” causing a tremendous amount of confusion, particularly among those who do not routinely operate within intelligence circles. While intelligence and information are certainly related, intelligence generally functions as a subset of information, rather than as an interchangeable synonym. For the sake of clarity and consistency, this thesis will use Mark Lowenthal’s definition of intelligence: “information that meets the stated or understood needs of policymakers and has been collected, refined, and narrowed to meet those needs.”<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, the term “intelligence” is used primarily in the context of products – pieces of data collected, processed, analyzed, and disseminated to meet policymakers’ needs. Examples of intelligence cited more specifically in subsequent chapters include communications intercepts, satellite imagery, strategic intentions, indications of enemy movement, battle tactics, and enemy order of battle. “Intelligence sharing,” then, is defined as the deliberate exchange of these pieces of intelligence data and analysis between two entities for the purpose of pursuing coordinated policies.

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<sup>2</sup> Mark Lowenthal. *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*. CQ Press. Washington, DC. 2006. 2.

Another term used extensively throughout this thesis and thus requiring clarification is “Anglo-American special relationship.” As Chapter II demonstrates, the “special relationship” is based on many factors, and the meaning of the term itself tends to take the shape of the many socio-political vessels into which it is poured. For the purposes of this thesis, however, the “special relationship” will be broadly defined as the tendency of American and British governments to seek the advice or support of one another in pursuit of foreign policy and to place greater value on that advice and support than that of other foreign alliances. The “special relationship” implies a certain degree of preferential treatment, both in terms of a willingness to cooperate on policy matters and a mutual status of *primus inter pares*, or “first among equals.”<sup>3</sup>

### C. IMPORTANCE

From the British perspective, much is to be gained from continuing the close intelligence sharing relationship currently enjoyed with the United States; conversely, the loss of this most important intelligence sharing relationship would be catastrophic. The Americans have committed a greater percentage and overall quantity of their financial resources to their intelligence community than the British are either able or willing to expend. In addition, maintaining close ties in general and sharing intelligence in specific translates into British influence over the world’s lone superpower, a position unique to the British and one they cannot afford to allow to atrophy. Nile Gardiner elucidates the potential ramifications of this atrophy when he writes, “For Britain, there is much to lose from a weakening of the Anglo-American alliance: the further loss of national sovereignty, the diminution of British global power and influence, the loosening of defence [sic] and intelligence ties, and a weakening of the close-knit financial, trade, and investment relationship.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Douglas T. Stuart. “‘Well, Isn’t That Special?’: Concluding Remarks on U.S.-UK Relations at the Start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” In *U.S.-UK Relations at the Start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. Jeffrey D. McCausland and Douglas T. Stuart. (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, January 2006). 204.

<sup>4</sup> Nile Gardiner. “British Conservatives Must Defend the U.S.-UK Special Relationship.” Heritage Foundation. WebMemo No. 1201. August 28, 2006. 2.  
[http://www.heritage.org/Research/Europe/upload/wm\\_1201.pdf](http://www.heritage.org/Research/Europe/upload/wm_1201.pdf) (accessed June 4, 2008).

From the American perspective, the United Kingdom represents its most important foreign alliance. The U.S. movement toward multilateralism represents a necessary aspect of the GWOT, as the international nature of the GWOT requires international cooperation. Emphasizing the abandonment of unilateral policies in pursuit of the GWOT, Derek Reveron concludes that America cannot “fight by itself a long, complex war waged by terrorists with a global reach.”<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, the October 2005 U.S. National Intelligence Strategy called for the American intelligence community to “strengthen existing foreign intelligence relationships to help meet global security challenges.”<sup>6</sup> Given this multilateral dimension, the U.S.-UK relationship is of critical importance to America. The United States must maintain its close relationship with the United Kingdom in order to retain at least this single supportive voice in international forums.

Despite its history, closeness, and strategic importance, the U.S.-UK “special relationship” today hangs delicately in the balance. The British hold the tenuous political position of being a key partner in alliances on both sides of the Atlantic. At this critical crossroad, many analysts claim that the United Kingdom must choose its primary loyalty either to its traditional bond with the United States or to full integration with the European Union. This decision point poses a tremendous problem for all parties with regard to intelligence sharing. If the UK chooses EU integration over its relationship with the United States, will the Americans be able to continue to trust the British with their most intimate intelligence secrets? If the UK chooses the United States over the EU, would that derail the EU’s efforts to increase intelligence sharing among its member states, develop a Common Foreign and Security Policy or European Security and Defense Policy, or integrate further?

While sharing intelligence between sovereign nations creates daunting dilemmas (trust, vulnerability to espionage, concerns for national sovereignty, etc.), intelligence exchange represents a critical mechanism for promoting continued solidarity in U.S.-UK

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<sup>5</sup> Derek Reveron. “Old Allies, New Friends: Intelligence-Sharing in the War on Terror.” *Orbis*. Vol. 50. Issue 3. Summer 2006. 454.

<sup>6</sup> United States Office of the Director of National Intelligence. *National Intelligence Strategy: Transformation through Integration and Innovation*. Washington, D.C. October 2005. 5.



security relations. The National Intelligence Strategy's mandate to foster intelligence relationships with foreign allies acknowledges both the present and future contribution of key foreign partners such as the United Kingdom to the overall GWOT intelligence effort.<sup>7</sup> Intelligence sharing is the critical element to maintaining and strengthening the trust upon which the U.S.-UK "special relationship" is predicated.

#### **D. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES**

The very nature of intelligence makes sharing difficult. Intelligence communities in countries around the world foster an environment of compartmentalization and "need-to-know." This culture often times prevents individuals within a country's own internal intelligence community from accessing segments of sensitive data, even if those individuals hold the appropriate security clearances. Even more so, then, are these "compartments" protected from foreign eyes. Richard J. Aldrich states, "Intelligence and security cooperation continues to be problematic because there is a fundamental tension between an increasingly networked world, which is ideal terrain for the new religious terrorism, and highly compartmentalized national intelligence-gathering."<sup>8</sup>

Intelligence communities also engender a tradition of over-classification. This is particularly true of intelligence collectors and analysts in the United States, who perpetually default to the NOFORN caveat (not releasable to foreign nationals) in classifying intelligence products. Disparities in clearances, intelligence handling procedures, background checks, training, classification nomenclature, etc. create at best a seed of doubt and at worst a sense of mistrust between international partners, which severely hinders the possibility of intelligence cooperation. Additionally, sharing intelligence over long distances requires expensive and labor-intensive fielding, use, and maintenance of secure, multilateral systems. For example, Linked Operational-Intelligence Centers Europe (LOCE) for NATO partners and the Combined Enterprise Regional Information Exchange System (CENTRIXS) for the Global Counter-terrorism

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<sup>7</sup> United States Office of the Director of National Intelligence. *National Intelligence Strategy: Transformation through Integration and Innovation*. Washington, D.C. October 2005.

<sup>8</sup>Richard J. Aldrich. "Transatlantic Intelligence and Security Cooperation." *International Affairs*. Vol. 80. No. 4. 2004. 732.

Task Force have been largely successful, but both systems took a great deal of time, funding, and commitment from a large number of coalition partners to come to fruition.

Furthermore, the wide variety of intelligence fields creates a diverse but disjointed intelligence community that hinders international sharing. In the United States, the collection and analysis of signals intelligence (SIGINT) is overseen and controlled largely by the National Security Agency (NSA), imagery intelligence (IMINT) by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), and human intelligence (HUMINT) by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). Other federal departments collect and manage intelligence specific to their organizational interests. For example, each service within the Department of Defense maintains an organic intelligence apparatus which focuses on specific areas of expertise (appropriately, the Navy on maritime intelligence, the Air Force on air and space intelligence, etc.). As a result, the United States has historically lacked a single point of interface for international intelligence sharing. Instead, the military services and agencies tend to interact independently with their foreign counterparts. At times U.S. intelligence interacts more effectively with its foreign counterparts than with agencies inside the U.S. intelligence community.

Aldrich aptly elucidates this lack of cohesion in U.S. intelligence: “The American intelligence community has long been noted for its lack of communal identity. Ingrained reluctance to share, together with incompatible data systems, was a key factor in explaining intelligence problems preceding 9/11.”<sup>9</sup> Even the establishment of the supposedly overarching Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) has, to this point, done little to resolve this issue inherent to the American intelligence structure.<sup>10</sup> Although the recently updated Executive Order 12333 gives the U.S. Director of National Intelligence the mandate to function as a single point of interface for

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<sup>9</sup> Aldrich, 741.

<sup>10</sup> Scott Shane. “Bush Issues Order Seeking to Unite the Efforts of U.S. Spy Agencies.” New York Times. August 1, 2008.  
<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=950CE2DB1E3BF932A3575BC0A96E9C8B63> (accessed October 1, 2008).

sharing intelligence with foreign governments and entities, it remains to be seen how effective that mandate will be in bringing resolution to this point of contention.<sup>11</sup>

And yet in the case of the U.S.-UK intelligence sharing relationship, obstacles such as these have been overcome in the past and continue to be worked through in ongoing conflicts. The Anglo-American intelligence relationship overcame these hurdles out of necessity; facing a common enemy – be it Nazi Germany, Soviet Communism, or Al Qaida – has energized a cooperative intelligence apparatus. This intelligence exchange has solidified the U.S.-UK “special relationship” in a way that nothing else could. Conventional wisdom holds that the “special relationship” was founded on three pillars: common culture, including history, language, values, and institutions; shared business interests, including to a large extent economic interdependence and foreign direct investment; and security cooperation. This thesis argues that, while all three of these elements are integral to the “special relationship,” security cooperation is the most important leg in the triad and a leg that is often overlooked. Furthermore, this thesis argues that the security aspect of the “special relationship” would be unable to stand alone without the indispensable factor of intelligence sharing. Intelligence sharing solidifies the partnership by refining a common view of mutual threats, providing continuity through times of political conflict, and validating shared policies. Finally, this thesis asserts that, as it has been in the past and is in the present, the Anglo-American intelligence partnership will continue to be absolutely essential to the effectiveness of the “special relationship” in the years to come.

## **E. LITERATURE REVIEW**

A great deal of literature discusses, either directly or indirectly, the nature and origins of the “special relationship” that the United States and United Kingdom enjoy. The literature discusses the history, causes, motivations, and extent of the Anglo-American partnership, largely seeking to examine what makes the “special relationship” special. The literature researched for this thesis was restricted to the unclassified, open

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<sup>11</sup> *Executive Order 12333: United States Intelligence Activities*.  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/nationalsecurity/amended12333.pdf> (accessed October 1, 2008).

source realm. Every effort has been made to keep this thesis unclassified, primarily because a classified thesis regarding the importance of intelligence sharing would be inconsistent, as a limited distribution goes directly against the theme of the work. Though classified examples of intelligence sharing or failure to share might have provided additional evidence, the wealth of unclassified literature leads compellingly to the conclusions of this project.

On the relationship's beginnings, many works such as John Baylis' *Anglo-American Defense Relations 1939-1984* and David Reynolds' *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance 1937-41: A Study in Competitive Co-operation* trace the roots of the "special relationship" back as far as the build-up to World War II. These conclude that Lend-Lease policy and the resurgent German threat to Western interests clearly set the stage for a preferential U.S.-UK relationship which World War II sealed in blood. A few authors stretch the special relationship's beginnings back to the UK effort to spur the United States to action in World War I. Among these are Phyllis Soybel's *A Necessary Relationship: The Development of Anglo-American Cooperation in Naval Intelligence* and Barbara Tuchman's *The Zimmermann Telegram*. Soybel and Tuchman both argue that British intelligence in the form of decrypted German telegrams was vital in convincing a reluctant United States that conflict with Germany was imminent and drawing the Americans into World War I on the side of the Triple Entente.

The Cold War tested the Anglo-American partnership in ways that the two World Wars had not. Specifically, the issue of nuclear technology nearly severed the "special relationship." Two major articles which discuss this issue at length are Michael Goodman's "With a Little Help from My Friends: The Anglo-American Atomic Intelligence Partnership, 1945-1958" and John Baylis' "The 1958 Anglo-American Mutual Defence [sic] Agreement: The Search for Nuclear Interdependence." Both articles enumerate the difficulties brought on by the sudden truncation of Anglo-American nuclear ties with the 1946 McMahon Act and the events which led to reconciliation in 1958 with the Mutual Defense Agreement.

An argument promoted by some critics in recent days, such as Robert Kagan in his incendiary *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, asserts that friction between the United States and European countries, including the United Kingdom, has arisen due to the disparity in military capability and the willingness to flex military muscle in pursuit of policy. In an article in *Foreign Affairs* published in 2006, Lawrence D. Freedman dispels this notion as it pertains to the Anglo-American “special relationship.” Arguing directly against Kagan, Freedman asserts that statistically, the British have actually gone to war more frequently since World War II than their American counterparts. Freedman claims that the transatlantic angst stems, rather, from “U.S. hesitation and uncertainty when going to war.”<sup>12</sup> Freedman discusses a pair of hiccups in the “special relationship” which he cites as examples in support of his argument, comparing the latest Iraq war with the conflict in the Falklands in 1982.

In assessing the current Anglo-American partnership, numerous sources trumpet the strength and endurance of the “special relationship” the United States enjoys with their British counterparts, while others cite indicators that Anglo-American relations have begun to fizzle. Freedman claims that, despite the aforementioned hiccups, the U.S.-UK relationship today remains strong, stating, “If anything, in recent years, this special relationship has enjoyed something of a revival.”<sup>13</sup> Conversely, Dr. Nile Gardiner contends that the “special relationship” may be nearing extinction. Gardiner dubs the relationship as “in jeopardy,” due to ongoing political movements “away from the United States and... closer to the European Union on major international issues.”<sup>14</sup>

Numerous journal and newspaper articles give account of the current state of the “special relationship,” such as “British Conservatives Must Defend the U.S.-UK Special Relationship” written by the aforementioned Dr. Nile Gardiner of the Heritage Foundation. Two of the recent major works on the present state of Anglo-American relations are Peter Riddell’s *Hug Them Close: Blair, Clinton, Bush and the ‘Special*

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<sup>12</sup> Lawrence D. Freedman. “The Special Relationship, Then and Now.” *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 85, No. 3, May/June 2006. 62.

<sup>13</sup> Freedman, 61.

<sup>14</sup> Nile Gardiner, 2.

*Relationship*', which discusses former British Prime Minister Tony Blair's seemingly unquestioning support for American foreign policies, and John Dumbrell's *A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations in the Cold War and After*, which examines Anglo-American relations leading up to September 11, 2001. Most analysts agree that the ostensibly unwavering and unconditional support given President George W. Bush by Prime Minister Blair for military action in Iraq has tainted the effectiveness of the "special relationship."

Most sources discuss the "special relationship," while including intelligence cooperation merely as a minor subset of the overall relationship, rather than as the primary object of study. Among the relative few focused on Anglo-American intelligence or intelligence exchange are Peter Gudgin's *Military Intelligence: A History*, written from the perspective of the British military intelligence establishment and Michael Herman's *Intelligence Power in Peace and War*, comparing and contrasting U.S. and UK intelligence processes and architectures.

International intelligence cooperation promotes a common threat perception by ensuring that each country's decision makers are basing their views on the wealth of accumulated knowledge, not merely intelligence collected and analyzed by their own indigenous agencies. Shared intelligence brings disparate viewpoints into alignment and enables multiple countries to pursue common policies in the face of a perceived mutual threat. This idea is epitomized by an article written by Chris Clough in *The International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* on the challenges of foreign intelligence sharing. Clough states,

The basic factor is perceived threat. The relationship balances on the resources required to provide intelligence on that threat, countered against the potential risks inherent in cooperation. But, if sufficient risk exists, cooperation can overcome any restraint."<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Bjorn Muller-Wille reinforces the cause and effect of intelligence exchange and perceived threat in his work on intelligence cooperation within the European Union, stating that "national threat perceptions are more likely to be compatible if the [European] Union and all member-states have access to the same

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<sup>15</sup> Chris Clough. "Quid Pro Quo: The Challenges of International Strategic Intelligence Cooperation." *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*. 17:4, 2004. 605.

information and if the different national concerns are articulated and taken into consideration in an analysis based on the shared information.”<sup>16</sup> His statement reinforces the notion that a connection between intelligence sharing and threat perception not only exists, but is paramount in improving international relations. He sums up this idea succinctly: “Harmonizing the knowledge is the first step towards harmonizing views and security interests.”<sup>17</sup>

In turn, fostering common views on shared threats and shared enemies is vital to maintaining an alliance. In his work on European integration in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Geir Lundstad invokes the realist school of international relations, stating that “almost without exception alliances do not survive the disappearance of the threat against which they are directed.”<sup>18</sup> The opposite can also be logically inferred: that a critical element in maintaining an alliance is the sustainment of a common view of mutual threats. Thus, because intelligence sharing has been shown to be essential in maintaining this common threat view, intelligence cooperation is also essential to the long-term health of alliances such as the “special relationship” enjoyed by the United States and the United Kingdom.

## **F. THESIS OVERVIEW**

The early twentieth century saw the burgeoning Anglo-American alliance grow from a partnership of tacit security cooperation into a relationship of unprecedented collaborative intimacy – a transformation cultivated principally by the interchange of intelligence. More recently, the matrix of mutual validation ensconcing this partnership has commanded the attention, and often the scrutiny, of countries around the world, as shared intelligence between Great Britain and the United States remains the subtext of avowed justification for joint acts of war and aggression. This project unpacks the evolution of such intimacy, plotting points in history and in contemporary culture that offer a better sense of the trajectory that the partnership may travel throughout the

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<sup>16</sup> Bjorn Muller-Wille. “EU Intelligence Co-operation: A Critical Analysis.” *Contemporary Security Policy*. 23:2. August 1, 2002. 71.

<sup>17</sup> Muller-Wille, 71.

<sup>18</sup> Geir Lundestad. “*Empire*” by *Integration: The United States and European Integration, 1945-1997*. Oxford University Press. Oxford. 1998. 167.

coming decades. With this trajectory in view, this thesis argues that the United States and the United Kingdom must maintain the intelligence sharing upon which their partnership is predicated at a rate moderated to preserve each nation's independent sovereignty.

Laying the groundwork for this assertion, Chapter II examines the history of the Anglo-American "special relationship" and the influence that intelligence exchange had on the creation and solidification of the relationship. This chapter argues that the popular notion – culture, business interests, and security cooperation bond the "special relationship" – is incomplete without including U.S.-UK intelligence sharing as the key element. It argues further that security cooperation is the most important of these three factors, and that intelligence sharing is its defining characteristic. Relying upon three main cases studies – World War I, World War II, and the Cold War – Chapter II demonstrates how vital intelligence exchange was to the origin of Anglo-American security cooperation, to the solidification of the relationship through military success, and to ensuring the vitality of the partnership in spite of political strife. American entry into World War I on the side of the British hinged on a single piece of shared intelligence. The Allies developed a successful strategy to counter the German U-boat threat in World War II due to the efforts of shared Anglo-American intelligence. The Cold War showed how integral intelligence was to the "special relationship" in that the relationship sustained severe damage through legislation, high profile spy cases, and the deliberate withholding of intelligence during the Suez crisis, yet the partnership succeeded tremendously when intelligence was shared.

Building upon this groundwork, Chapter III discusses the impact of bilateral intelligence sharing on the respective British and American decisions to go to war in Iraq, as well as the impact of the Iraq war on the effectiveness of the U.S.-UK intelligence sharing relationship on the international stage. This chapter asserts that the attacks of September 11, 2001 resulted in policy changes which expanded the previous definition of a threat to include states which supported terrorism and possessed or pursued weapons of mass destruction. This shift in threat characterization prompted Britain and the United States to view war with Saddam Hussein's regime as the most logical solution for



safeguarding against the possibility of weapons of mass destruction ending up in the hands of terrorists. This chapter argues that both American and British leadership used intelligence to justify to the public their respective choices to go to war, and that the intelligence upon which those justifications were made had been shared between the United States and the United Kingdom. The failure of Anglo-American intelligence in Iraq has mitigated the effectiveness of the U.S.-UK intelligence partnership through a diminution in credibility and has prompted questions from policy analysts on both sides of the Atlantic about where British loyalty should lie.

Examining the quandary created by the failure of Anglo-American intelligence in the Iraq war and the uncertain waters into which such a failure thrusts the “special relationship,” Chapter IV elaborates on the potential for continued intelligence cooperation between America and Great Britain. Additionally, this chapter examines ramifications on the future effectiveness of the Anglo-American intelligence sharing of the pending British decision of EU integration. It argues that an overt British declaration of loyalty either to the United States or to the European Union would serve to diminish further the effectiveness of the “special relationship.” This chapter asserts that Anglo-American intelligence cooperation is crucial in addressing emergent threats in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and that, in order to operate most effectively, the British should continue to conduct policy in their traditional role as a transatlantic bridge.

Finally, Chapter V asserts that intelligence sharing was, is, and will be vital to the security facet of the Anglo-American relationship, and thus to the “special relationship” overall. In order to preserve the unique and longstanding intimacy between the United States and the United Kingdom, both countries must continue to collaborate in their accrual of sensitive intelligence, measuring this collaboration with deliberate care, ensuring the security of each country without sacrificing the sovereignty of either.

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## **II. INTELLIGENCE SHARING IN THE HISTORY OF THE “SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP”**

### **A. THREE RECURRING THEMES**

Historian Ray Raymond asserts that “some kind of intimate and unbreakable link does exist between the United States and Britain, and its roots are very deep.”<sup>19</sup> The “special relationship,” in ways spoken and unspoken, codified and understood, explicit and implicit, is a very real and often times tangible phenomenon. Modern examples from Prime Minister Blair’s response to 9/11, to continued British troops commitments to Operation Iraqi Freedom despite overwhelming public opposition to the war, to shared U.S.-UK policies, to the plethora of joint meetings between both countries’ key leaders, demonstrate that the Anglo-American relationship has repeatedly proven itself as “special.” Even American and British citizens feel a kinship, and it is a kinship recognized as “special” in greater Europe and throughout the world.

Historians consistently rely on three themes to explain why the relationship is so special: common culture, economic interdependence, and security cooperation. While each of these themes is important to the Anglo-American partnership, the security aspect of the relationship sets it apart as truly special. Yet, because the both Britain and the United States enjoy security arrangements with numerous countries, even this pillar would not by itself render the relationship “special” without something else cementing the partnership, creating an indissoluble bond and maintaining its strength and resilience through difficult times. This chapter asserts that intelligence cooperation makes the “special relationship” powerful, effective, and enduring, and that without intelligence exchange the three traditionally accepted pillars of the “special relationship” could not stand.

Common culture cannot explain the fluctuations in the U.S.-UK relationship, and close financial ties with other countries indicate that economic interdependence is not the

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<sup>19</sup> Ray Raymond. “The U.S.-UK Special Relationship in Historical Context: Lessons of the Past” in *U.S.-UK Relations at the Start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, edited by Jeffrey D. McCausland and Douglas T. Stuart. Strategic Studies Institute. January 2006. 1.

determining factor of the Anglo-American “special relationship.” Intelligence exchange – generally considered a subset of security operation – is the bedrock on which Anglo-American security cooperation has succeeded, and without which such success would have been impossible.

Intelligence sharing has proven vital to the formulation, strength, and continuity of the “special relationship.” This paper argues that, while not necessarily superior to those overarching themes, intelligence exchange between the United States and the United Kingdom has played the critical role of establishing and maintaining the partnership’s closeness, even through times of tremendous political anxiety and is therefore a key component of the Anglo-American “special relationship.”

## **B. COMMON CULTURE IS THE FOUNDATION, BUT NOT THE WHOLE HOUSE**

Many historians hold that the U.S.-UK relationship is “special” due to commonalities in culture. While common culture cannot account for the fluctuations in the relationship, shared culture certainly provided an important element in the foundation of the “special relationship.” Britons and Americans share history, language, heritage, core values, beliefs, and a legal structure in a way that is unique and specific to the partnership. While introducing Winston Churchill to a New York audience in 1900, Mark Twain described the “special relationship” in a way which still summarizes the U.S.-UK bond more than a century later: “We have always been kin: kin in blood, kin in religion, kin in representative government, kin in ideals, kin in just and lofty purposes.”<sup>20</sup> Because of these commonalities, Americans and Britons tend to hold similar views of one another and of the world at large; as George Ball said, “to an exceptional degree we look out on the world through similarly refracted mental spectacles.”<sup>21</sup>

Although it does not stand alone in generating the uniqueness of the “special relationship, common culture did create a framework within which the “special

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<sup>20</sup> As quoted in “Anglo-Saxon Attitudes.” *The Economist*. March 27, 2008. [http://www.economist.com/world/britain/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=10926321](http://www.economist.com/world/britain/displaystory.cfm?story_id=10926321) (accessed August 13, 2008).

<sup>21</sup> As quoted in John Baylis. *Anglo-American Defense Relations 1939-1984: The Special Relationship*. St. Martin’s Press. New York. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 1984. xvii.

relationship” could be established. First, shared language fosters an immediate rapport and understanding which neither the United States nor the United Kingdom enjoys with countries such as France, Germany, Russia, or China. Even other countries with which the United States has been said to maintain a “special relationship” must overcome a language barrier which does not exist between the United States and the United Kingdom. Although Canada maintains certain special intimacies with the United States mainly due to its geographic proximity, as do Australia and New Zealand due to shared language and values, the unique combination of common heritage and history found in the U.S.-UK relationship generates a primacy that cannot be found even among other English-speaking countries, or the so-called “Anglosphere.” Additionally, common core values elevate the Anglo-American partnership above their relations with other countries which do not espouse liberal democracy and individual rights. Furthermore, a shared basis in common law and legal structure provides both countries an apparatus with virtually interchangeable legal, governmental, and military parts. That these cultural commonalities played a substantial role in forming the basis of the “special relationship” is indisputable.

The common culture argument by itself, though, leads one to conclude that the “special relationship” existed and has been constant since the Revolutionary War. Writing in this vein, Raymond contends that the seeds of the Anglo-American “special relationship” were planted and have remained firmly rooted since the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the commonalities of British and American culture. He claims that during the Revolutionary War the American colonists did not rebel against England because they hated the British or abhorred being British subjects, but rather because they felt that the British parliament had abandoned the primary ideals of what it meant to *be British*. According to Raymond, the British “concept of liberty meant parliamentary consent to taxation, representative government, *habeus corpus*, trial by jury, and protection of the individual citizen from arbitrary arrest and from a corrupt government.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Raymond, 5.

Raymond asserts that because the British had forsaken these fundamental privileges when ruling the colonies, the American colonists found it, famously, “necessary to dissolve the political bands which connected them.”<sup>23</sup> He claims that “the colonists were not trying to reject their treasured British heritage, but rather to reaffirm and reclaim it from a foolish King and a corrupt political cadre.”<sup>24</sup> Essentially, the Americans rejected the British because, from their vantage point, the British had become un-British. According to David McCullough's Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of American founding father John Adams, Adams affirmed this notion in a widely-circulated 1765 essay which McCullough describes as “a statement of [Adams'] own fervent patriotism and the taproot conviction that American freedoms were not ideals still to be obtained, but rights long and firmly established by British law.”<sup>25</sup>

Even the manner with which the American colonists declared their collective independence reflected their British roots. Raymond quotes Winston Churchill, saying “The Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution are not only American documents. They follow on the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights as the great title deeds in which the liberties of the English-speaking peoples are founded.”<sup>26</sup>

Raymond asserts that “the real reason the special relationship is special... is that so much of the basic DNA of the infrastructure of the American political, legal, and economic system is British.”<sup>27</sup> In essence, historians suggest that the “special relationship” stems from the idea that when Britons and Americans look at each other across the Atlantic, they see a people, a government, and a society which differs little from their own.

That Americans and Britons share history, culture, values, and structures is a fact which has not changed in four centuries, yet the relationship has been anything but steady. Drawing the “special relationship” all the way back to the American Revolution

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<sup>23</sup> The U.S. Declaration of Independence.

<sup>24</sup> Raymond, 5.

<sup>25</sup> David McCullough. *John Adams*. Simon & Schuster. 2001. 59.

<sup>26</sup> Raymond, 6-7.

<sup>27</sup> Raymond, 4.

by virtue of common culture ignores not just mere strains in the relationship, but its clean breaks as well. These commonalities cannot, for example, explain outright war in 1812, the ambivalence of the British during the American Civil War, the political conflict during the Suez crisis in 1956 or over Grenada in 1983. Indeed, if common culture were the deciding factor on the success of the relationship, then the aforementioned strains and breaks would never have occurred at all. Shared culture, language, history, and values cannot explain the “special relationship” because they have remained essentially unchanged since before the American Revolution, whereas the U.S.-UK relationship has fluctuated tremendously during this same time period. The commonalities between the United States and the United Kingdom inarguably form a foundation on which the “special relationship” was built, but because this factor does not account for the fluctuations in the relationship, it cannot stand alone as the “special relationship’s” defining characteristic.

### **C. BUSINESS IS IMPORTANT, BUT NOT SPECIAL**

Economic interdependence is another recurring theme in the literature on the elements of the “special relationship.” Like the common culture argument, economic interdependence clearly constitutes an integral element in the foundation of the “special relationship; but also like common culture, economic interdependence cannot stand on its own in explaining the “special relationship.” That is not to diminish the importance of the business aspect of the “special relationship.” Indeed, economics was the very origin of the United Kingdom’s relationship with America: exploration of the New World was a for-profit enterprise. As a mercantilist empire, the British had sought to expand their access to previously untapped natural resources and found an abundance of those resources in America. For example, the failed British colony at Roanoke Island in 1584, the successful one at Jamestown in 1607, as well as the numerous others which followed began primarily as business ventures. Additionally, the British tried so desperately to defeat the colonists in the American Revolution because they did not want to lose the wealth being generated for the crown by the colonies, setting a precedent for other colonies to emulate which further reduced British global power and wealth.

The close economic bond that was born during the colonial period remains strong to the present day. Even after the Revolution, Great Britain remained the foremost trading partner of the United States. The War of 1812 began in large part because the British had imposed trade restrictions on the United States. From the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onward, Britain and America became increasingly economically interdependent, prompting the British premier to declare that anyone “who wishes prosperity to England... must wish prosperity to America.”<sup>28</sup> The Anglo-American economic relationship remains strong even after two world wars have left the United States the stronger economic power. The economic ties endure as a vital element in the “special relationship.” In 2007, the United Kingdom accounted for over 3.4% of total U.S. trade, an amount in excess of \$100 billion.<sup>29</sup> The United Kingdom remains to this day America’s primary destination of Foreign Direct Investment in the European Union.<sup>30</sup>

Certainly, Anglo-American history is steeped in a business partnership, and without such positive economic relations, the U.S.-UK relationship could not possibly be deemed “special.” However, as stated previously, the economic aspect cannot stand alone. Even excluding NAFTA partners Canada and Mexico, the United Kingdom ranked a distant fourth among overseas U.S. trade partners in 2007 (behind China, Japan, and Germany).<sup>31</sup> This demonstrates that while the United Kingdom is one of America’s primary trading partners, it still lags far behind China and *is not even the most prolific trading partner within the European Union*. Again, if economic interdependence were the key factor in characterizing a political relationship as “special,” then this title might be more apt for China, Germany, Canada, or others.

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<sup>28</sup> Bradford Perkins. *The Cambridge history of American foreign relations: volume I, the creation of a republican empire, 1776-1865*. Cambridge University Press. 1993. 206

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. “Foreign Trade Statistics.” <http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/highlights/top/top0712.html> (accessed August 14, 2008).

<sup>30</sup> Michael Calingaert. “The Special Relationship – Economic and Business Aspects: American Perspective.” in *U.S.-UK Relations at the Start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, edited by Jeffrey D. McCausland and Douglas T. Stuart. Strategic Studies Institute. January 2006. 21.

<sup>31</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. “Foreign Trade Statistics.”



Although the Anglo-American trade relationship has remained strong since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the overall political relationship has traveled a bumpy road, often because of conflict stemming from economic divergences. British economic policies generated strife between Britain and the United States during the American Civil War by trying to conduct commerce with the South through the Federal blockade, by receiving Confederate emissaries looking for economic aid, and by supplying arms and combat ships to the South.<sup>32</sup> Economic conflict continued to encumber Anglo-American relations through the turn of the century as well: in settling the territorial dispute Alaska and Canada following the Klondike gold rush,<sup>33</sup> in claiming development rights and influence over the Panama Canal,<sup>34</sup> and in establishing power and boundaries in Venezuela and other parts of Latin America.<sup>35</sup> Yet, during this period, Britain and America continued down the road toward economic interdependence. According to Bradford Perkins, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, “Imports [to Britain] from the United States roughly equaled those from Britain’s own empire... In addition, the United States took more exports [from Britain] than any other nation.”<sup>36</sup>

These fluctuating periods of economic distress and burgeoning trade did not occur coincidentally with the emergence of the “special relationship.” Like common culture, economic interdependence assisted in laying the groundwork for the Anglo-American relationship to become “special.” However, because it was not directly responsible for generating the unique conditions which set the Anglo-American relationship apart, the economic aspect of the “special relationship” does not independently make the Anglo-American relationship “special.”

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<sup>32</sup> Perkins, 224-228.

<sup>33</sup> William H. Becker. “America Adjusts to World Power.” in *Economics and world power: an assessment of American diplomacy since 1789*. Edited by William H. Becker and Samuel F. Wells, Jr. Columbia University Press. New York. 1984. 205.

<sup>34</sup> Walter LaFeber. *The Cambridge history of American foreign relations: volume II, the American search for opportunity, 1865-1913*. Cambridge University Press. 1993. 192.

<sup>35</sup> Walter LaFeber. “The Background of Cleveland’s Venezuelan Policy: A Reinterpretation.” *The American historical review*. Volume 66. Number 4. July 1961. 947.

<sup>36</sup> Perkins, 206.

## D. SECURITY COOPERATION

The third pillar in the literature on the U.S.-UK “special relationship” is bi-lateral cooperation in areas of mutual security concern. The security aspect of Anglo-American relations sets the partnership apart as unique and distinct in ways that culture and business could not. James Wither states, “The military partnership is a feature of Anglo-American relations that truly justifies the description ‘special.’ No other aspect of the relationship involves the shared privations and risks of combat, including the payment of the ‘blood price’ famously referred to by Prime Minister Tony Blair.”<sup>37</sup> As Wither alludes, one reason security trumps the other two legs of the triad is that Americans and Britons have repeatedly fought and bled to preserve one another’s existence. In this way, the “special relationship” is the direct result of the Shakespearean “band of brothers” mentality, where men and peoples are bonded together through shared sacrifice when confronted with a common enemy. A second, more important reason is that the ebb and flow of the overall Anglo-American relationship has been tied directly to security cooperation.

Security cooperation encompasses several elements – among them, coordinated military operations, collaboration on plans and policies, and sharing intelligence on threats of mutual concern. The key to unlocking the door to success in U.S-UK security cooperation, and hence the defining characteristic of the security aspect of the Anglo-American “special relationship,” was the shared view of a common threat reinforced by bilateral intelligence exchange. Intelligence sharing augments every other aspect of security cooperation, yet it requires a unique level of trust, over and above the level required for the other aspects. The trust mandated by intelligence sharing makes it stand apart within the sphere of security cooperation.

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<sup>37</sup> James Wither. “An Endangered Partnership: The Anglo-American Defence Relationship in the Early Twenty-first Century.” *European security*. Volume 15. Number 1. March 1, 2006. 48. For referenced statement concerning the British willingness to pay the ‘blood price’ to secure the “special relationship” with the United States, see “Britain Will Pay ‘Blood Price’ – Blair.” BBC News. September 6, 2002. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/2239887.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/2239887.stm) (accessed November 6, 2008).

As mentioned previously, the Anglo-American relationship was littered with conflict in one form or another for more than a century. As the relationship developed through the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, America and Britain became more dependent upon one another to protect matters of mutual concern in their respective hemispheres. According to William Becker, “America needed Great Britain to maintain the historic balance of power in Europe... Britain deferred more and more to the United States in Latin America.”<sup>38</sup> In spite of a tacit understanding that security cooperation – presumably in the form of military assistance -- would be forthcoming if necessary, nothing in the Anglo-American relationship was substantiated by shared intelligence prior to 1917, making the alliance tenuous at best. Although Britain and America had a foundation in common security concerns, legitimate U.S.-UK security cooperation – with two sovereign nations operating as full partners to defeat a shared enemy – did not occur until World War I.

## **1. World War I**

World War I holds what might be the single greatest example of the power of intelligence exchange to influence security policy. Although the United States shared political concerns with the United Kingdom during World War I, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson declined to intervene militarily until the British shared a crucial piece of sensitive intelligence with him. American participation in World War I was not a foregone conclusion. President Wilson won re-election in 1916 under the slogan “He kept us out of the war!” Maintaining the prevailing isolationist, non-interventionist sentiment, Wilson viewed the “Great War” as a European struggle in which the United States had but a passive interest and no greater personal role than mediator. The United Kingdom viewed Wilson as obstinate and the vast American resources as the potential savior for the greatly depleted Triple Entente. The British believed the balance would permanently shift in their favor if the United States could be convinced to throw their substantial weight to the side of the Triple Entente.

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<sup>38</sup> Becker, 205.

For three years, Germany successfully kept the United States on the sidelines. In the face of stark American opposition, Germany ceased from its fundamental strategy of unrestricted submarine warfare. This German concession was sufficient to overcome the cultural and economic bonds between the United States and the United Kingdom and natural sympathy for the Triple Entente: America maintained her neutrality.

*That changed, though, when the British shared crucial intelligence with the United States.* On January 17, 1917, British Naval Intelligence, under the innocuous moniker of “Room 40,” decrypted a classified telegram sent by German Foreign Secretary Arthur Zimmermann to the German Ambassador to the United States, Johann von Bernstorff. The telegram bore the classification “Most Secret” and gave von Bernstorff instruction that it “be handed on to the Imperial Minister in Mexico by a safe route.”<sup>39</sup> The telegram read:

We intend to begin unrestricted submarine warfare on the first of February. We shall endeavor in spite of this to keep the United States neutral. In the event of not succeeding, we make Mexico a proposal of alliance on the following basis: make war together, make peace together, generous financial support, and an understanding on our part that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. The settlement in detail is left to you.

You will inform the president [of Mexico] of the above most secretly as soon as the outbreak of war with the United States is certain and add the suggestion that he should, on his own initiative, invite Japan to immediate adherence and at the same time mediate between Japan and ourselves.

Please call the president’s attention to the fact that the unrestricted employment of our submarines now offers the prospect of compelling England to make peace within a few months. Acknowledge receipt. Zimmermann.<sup>40</sup>

Following the herculean decryption effort on the part of Room 40 analysts, British intelligence knew that it had in the Zimmermann telegram the key to persuading the United States to enter the war. The British delayed giving the telegram’s contents to the

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<sup>39</sup> Barbara W. Tuchman. *The Zimmermann Telegram*. The Macmillan Company. New York. 1958. 6.

<sup>40</sup> Tuchman, 146.

Americans to ensure the security of the sources and methods of the British cryptanalysts, such that Wilson did not receive the telegram until February 26. Upon receipt, Wilson asked his envoy in London to thank the British “for information of ‘such inestimable value’ and to convey his very great appreciation of ‘so marked an act of friendliness on the part of the British government.’”<sup>41</sup> The Germans had already resumed unrestricted submarine warfare, but Wilson’s great incredulity was reserved for the notion that Germany would support a direct attack against American soil via Mexico. Later that week, the text of the telegram was released to the public, and on April 2, 1917 Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany.

For the British, the sharing of this specific piece of intelligence accomplished its desired effect: it was crucial to drawing America into the war. For the Americans, the Zimmerman telegram marked the beginning of significant intelligence sharing with the British and a special Anglo-American relationship which would ultimately secure victory in World War I. Given Wilson’s entrenched stance on neutrality, Anglo-American security cooperation was unlikely without the intelligence provided by the British. In his work on the history of Room 40, Patrick Beesly summarized the impact of British-American intelligence exchange during World War I, stating that without the intelligence obtained by the British and shared with the United States, “America would not have been dragged into the war in April 1917. Good Intelligence was the keystone of victory.”<sup>42</sup> However limited the ability of the Americans to collect and share intelligence, the effect of British willingness to share its intelligence was key in establishing the “special relationship” on which Wilson based his decision to enter the war.

Another point to be drawn out of America’s entry into World War I is the fact that Wilson would not budge until the intelligence he received from the British prompted him to view the German threat the same way the United Kingdom did. The Zimmermann telegram convinced Wilson that citizens’ lives, the country’s territorial integrity, and national sovereignty were in jeopardy due to German aggression, a view which matched

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<sup>41</sup> Tuchman, 173.

<sup>42</sup> Patrick Beesly. *Room 40: British Naval Intelligence 1914-1918*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. New York. 1-2.

Britain's perspective on its own condition. At the point when a mutual threat was acknowledged, American entry on the side of the British became inevitable. This mutual threat, however, was only brought into focus through intelligence sharing; without it, as Beesly stated, Wilson would probably have remained entrenched in neutrality and America would not have entered into the war when it did, if at all. This marks one of the distinct values of intelligence exchange: the ability to generate a common view of threats in order to pursue a shared solution. Intelligence sharing was the impetus behind the security aspect of the "special relationship" and became the fertile soil in which the relationship grew and flourished through the end of the century.

## **2. World War II**

While experts may differ regarding the exact point at which the U.S.-UK partnership became "special," most historians agree that the Anglo-American "special relationship" reached a high point during World War II. Wither goes so far as to define the "special relationship" by its relation to World War II; he describes the partnership as "an unusual bi-lateral bond that was forged in the Second World War."<sup>43</sup> John Baylis, in his work on U.S.-UK defense relations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, cites a joint British-American post-war study, in which "the authors suggest that it was during the Second World War that the intimacy of cooperation was raised to a new level 'never before realised [sic] or even approached' by other sovereign states."<sup>44</sup> Baylis also quotes George Marshall, who described the Anglo-American wartime relationship as "the most complete unification of military effort ever achieved by two allied states."<sup>45</sup> *The closeness and success of U.S.-UK military collaboration during World War II was directly proportional to shared intelligence.* As intelligence sharing increased, diplomatic coordination, political cooperation, and military integration into command and control structures increased in

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<sup>43</sup> Wither, 47.

<sup>44</sup> Baylis (1984), xvi.

<sup>45</sup> Baylis (1984). 21.

kind. Intelligence collaboration enabled strategic, operational, and tactical success throughout the war; without intelligence sharing, the Allies would almost certainly have lost World War II.

The Anglo-American intelligence sharing relationship during World War II was forged by practicality and necessity. The British and the Americans faced a common enemy which threatened the existence of the former and the ideology of both. By virtue of geographic proximity, Great Britain was the primary target of the Germans on the Western Front (after the fall of France, naturally) and the obvious location from which to stage Allied resistance. By virtue of its relative size and abundant resources, both in material terms and in personnel, America was obliged both to resupply its British ally and forward deploy troops and supplies to Great Britain to contribute to the Allied effort in Europe. The result was an unprecedented integrated Anglo-American military command and control structure, undergirded by a near-seamless intelligence sharing apparatus. For instance, as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, General Eisenhower employed a fully integrated staff, which set a precedent during the war which later became the foundation for NATO integrated operational structure. Although the examples of Anglo-American intelligence exchange during World War II are numerous, the Battle of the Atlantic typifies the strength and depth of the intelligence sharing relationship during this tumultuous period.

Anglo-American intelligence sharing was vital to Allied success in the Battle of the Atlantic in two ways. First, intelligence collaboration altered the strategy of maritime shipping protection. When the war began, British merchant shipping made itself vulnerable to U-boat attacks by vessels sailing alone. According to Richard Overy,

The [German] submarines were helped by the British decision not to convoy ships with speeds of less than 9 knots or more than 13; during 1940 sixty per cent of ships sunk were not sailing in convoy. In that same year 992 ships were sunk, totaling 3.4 million tons, a quarter of British merchant shipping.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Richard Overy. *Why the Allies won*. Pimlico. 2006. 37-38.

When the Americans entered the war, they made the same mistake the British had made in 1940:

The Americans sent merchant ships and oil tankers without escort, unconvoyed, using radio so openly that the submarines had no difficulty in closing on the isolated vessels as each betrayed their position... The American navy had encouraged cargo ships to sail independently, without escorts... In four months 1.2 million tons of shipping was sunk off the American coast alone. The Allies lost 2.6 million tons of shipping between January and April, more than had been lost in the Atlantic in the whole of 1941. U-boat losses in January were only three, in February only two.<sup>47</sup>

The Americans had thought that the convoying of British and Canadian merchants in 1940-41 had caused the vessels to be more vulnerable to submarine attack. After four months, with the lesson having been learned the hard way and at the urging of British naval intelligence, "Convoying was instituted, together with a blackout and radio silence."<sup>48</sup> Intelligence sharing had directly altered the Allied maritime shipping strategy.

The second way intelligence sharing proved crucial to Allied success in the Battle of the Atlantic was through code breaking. The European Theater in World War II was a two-fold battle of wits for both the Allies and for Germany, with each side making every effort to break the enemy's codes and to keep their own codes secure. Unlike their American counterparts, the British had not dismantled their intelligence organizations and infrastructure between world wars, giving them a decided advantage in breaking German codes when the war began. The enterprising Americans caught on quickly, but British intelligence and ULTRA, the British codename for their ability to intercept and decrypt German messages, led the way for Allied intelligence.

As previously mentioned, Allied re-supply efforts relied predominantly on the steady flow of men and materiel across the Atlantic Ocean. The Germans understood this fact, and committed their stealthy U-boat submarines to the task of disrupting the Allied flow of supplies from the United States. The Germans also developed a sophisticated

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<sup>47</sup> Overy, 56.

<sup>48</sup> Overy, 57.



encryption machine, codenamed Enigma, which, at the outset of the war, consisted of a series of three mechanical rotors connected by a complex series of electronic switches and circuits. Each letter typed on the Enigma machine would stand for a different letter, but with each successive letter typed, the rotors turned, changing the coding mechanism and exponentially complicating the encryption. The receiver of an Enigma encoded message would have to set the rotors to the correct configuration in order to be able to decrypt the message. The Enigma system was so complex as to be believed by the Germans to be mathematically incapable of compromise.

British intelligence gradually attained a decent measure of success against the three-rotor Enigma in the opening years of the war before American entry. According to John Keegan, on February 1, 1942, German U-boats began using four rotors in their Enigma machines, further hampering Allied decryption efforts.<sup>49</sup> The subsequent stretch of the war during which the Allied intelligence team was stymied by the shift in the German encryption mechanisms was by far the most costly for the Allied convoy supply effort. From December 1941 to August 1942, the Allies lost 609 merchant ships and tankers, totaling over 3.1 million gross tons, while the Germans lost a mere 22 U-boats.

With the Americans fully on board after Pearl Harbor, the Anglo-American intelligence team worked feverishly on the joint task of breaking the Enigma code. The Allies finally cracked the Enigma code in April 1943, and the tide of the Battle of the Atlantic turned permanently in favor of the Allies, enabling them to ascertain the locations and intentions of German U-boats, re-direct merchant shipping convoys, and vector anti-submarine aircraft and warships to prosecute the enemy submarines. According to Keegan, “In May 1943, of the forty-nine U-boats which sailed on patrol to the North Atlantic convoy routes, eighteen were lost, a destruction rate of over one in three. Between them, the forty-nine boats sank only two merchantmen.”<sup>50</sup> The coordinated Anglo-American code-breaking effort directly enabled this monumental success.

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<sup>49</sup> John Keegan. *Intelligence In War*. Vintage Books. New York. October 2004. 243.

<sup>50</sup> Keegan, 232.

According to General Eisenhower, the Anglo-American intelligence collaboration efforts were “decisive” in determining the outcome of the war in the European theater and were consequently vital to the success of U.S.-UK security cooperation.<sup>51</sup> In a letter dated July 1945 to the Chief of the British Secret Service, Eisenhower gave effusive praise and unequivocal credit to Anglo-American intelligence: “The intelligence which has emanated from you before and during this campaign has been of priceless value to me. It has simplified my task as a commander enormously. It has saved thousands of British and American lives and, in no small way, contributed to the speed with which the enemy was routed and eventually forced to surrender.”<sup>52</sup>

### **3. The Cold War**

The Cold War clearly demonstrated the value and importance of intelligence sharing to the Anglo-American “special relationship.” When one side withheld intelligence, the relationship suffered; when both countries shared intelligence, the relationship flourished. Additionally, the Cold War showed that the forming of an alliance is not sufficient to cause enhanced security cooperation; intelligence sharing, however, is sufficient.

#### **a. The McMahon Act**

The Cold War began with a massive obstacle to Anglo-American intelligence exchange. In 1946, the U.S. Congress passed the McMahon Act, which effectively cut off the British from the nuclear secrets which they had had a hand in developing during World War II. According to Baylis:

Despite close collaboration in the Manhattan project and a series of wartime agreements (at Quebec in August 1943 and Hyde Park, New York state, in September 1944) which promised continuing post-war cooperation in the atomic energy field, the United States passed the McMahon Act in August 1946 prohibiting the passing of classified atomic energy information to all foreign countries, including Britain, ‘on pain of life imprisonment or even death.’<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> F.W. Winterbotham. *The Ultra Secret*. Harper and Row, Publishers. New York. 1974. 191.

<sup>52</sup> Winterbotham, 2.

<sup>53</sup> John Baylis. “The 1958 Anglo-American Mutual Defence Agreement: The Search for Nuclear Interdependence.” *Journal of Strategic Studies*. Volume 31. Number 3. June 2008. 427.

This overt truncation of the atomic partnership stemmed partly from fear of Soviet spies in the nuclear program and partly from the notion that the United States had begun to see itself as *the* power to stand in opposition to the Soviet Union, rather than merely the *leader* of the allied opposition to Soviet Communism it was to become. David Dimbleby called this severance of atomic ties a “casualty of America’s new nationalism.”<sup>54</sup>

Because the United States had effectively cut off the British from their nuclear intelligence, the relationship was badly damaged. For the United Kingdom, the McMahon Act in tandem with the abrupt termination of Lend-Lease just eight days after the end of World War II signaled a disastrous decline in British power and influence. The British became determined to develop nuclear weapons and technology independent of the United States, exerting every possible asset and employing every available tactic to acquire what they deemed as necessary knowledge. Concurrently, the British redoubled their efforts to reconcile the Anglo-American partnership to the point of coining the term “special relationship.” In a speech given in Missouri in 1946 during his hiatus from the Prime Minister’s office, Winston Churchill articulated the British desire for “a special relationship between the United States and the British Commonwealth.” Churchill proposed a “fraternal association of the English-speaking peoples,” which was, according to Dimbleby and Reynolds, “the only hope for a ‘haggard’ world, in which all countries... were now confronted by the peril of communism.”<sup>55</sup> Churchill’s speech elucidated both the problem and the solution: the shared threat of communism forced a brotherhood to stand together in opposition, working together in every possible way to thwart the mutual enemy. Churchill’s speech was not well-received by the Americans at the time, but it gave the “special relationship” a name and articulated its necessity, an idea to which both the United States and the United Kingdom would later reconcile.

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<sup>54</sup> David Dimbleby and David Reynolds. *An Ocean Apart: The Relationship Between Britain and America in the Twentieth Century*. Random House. New York. 1988. 180.

<sup>55</sup> Dimbleby and Reynolds. 184.

*b. Communist Spies*

In addition to the damage inflicted by the policy shift in the McMahon Act, high profile cases of espionage threatened to diminish the effectiveness of the Anglo-American intelligence relationship even further. In the 1930s, Soviet intelligence successfully recruited several British college students. Among them was a young man named H.A.R. “Kim” Philby, the son of a British diplomat. Philby began working in British intelligence in 1944, and after World War II became the head of Britain’s Soviet counterintelligence desk. From 1949-1951, Philby served as the British intelligence liaison to the CIA in Washington, DC.<sup>56</sup>

Throughout his time in British intelligence, Philby fed highly sensitive and classified British and American intelligence to the Soviet Union. His unique positions enabled him both to inform the Soviets of Anglo-American intelligence activities and to prevent Anglo-American intelligence collected against the Soviets from being acted upon. Philby singlehandedly undermined several major intelligence operations, which resulted in the capture, arrest, torture, or murder of hundreds of British and American intelligence operatives.<sup>57</sup>

In 1951, amidst the anxiety in Anglo-American intelligence relations caused by the McMahon Act, the revelation that Philby and other British officials he had recruited and assisted were Soviet spies cracked the foundation of trust in the Anglo-American intelligence relationship. Had the mutual threat of Soviet expansionism not continued to hold America and Britain together, the work of Kim Philby and his associates may well have severed the long-standing intelligence friendship. The threat that the Soviet Union posed to both the United States and the United Kingdom required intelligence collaboration between them, ensuring the primacy of Anglo-American

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<sup>56</sup> William A. Henry, III, Ann Blackman and Frank Melville. “Espionage No Regrets Kim Philby: 1912-1988.” *TIME*. May 23, 1988. <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,967442,00.html> (accessed November 13, 2008).

<sup>57</sup> Julien E. Barnes. “The Third Man: The Havoc He Wreaked Stretched Far and Wide.” *U.S. News & World Report*. January 19, 2003. <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/culture/articles/030127/27philby.htm> (accessed November 12, 2008).

security cooperation, and hence the continuation of the “special relationship.” Yet even with such seemingly catastrophic revelations, the partnership had still not yet reached the fullest extent of its ebb.

*c. The North Atlantic Treaty, the Suez Crisis and Sputnik*

On April 4, 1949, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and nine other European countries signed the North Atlantic Treaty, creating a security alliance which declared that “an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all...”<sup>58</sup> As events the following decade would show, however, a security alliance was not sufficient to ensure enhanced security cooperation; intelligence sharing, or the lack thereof, held sway as the determining factor in Anglo-American security cooperation through the Cold War.

The Suez Crisis in 1956 serves as a prime example of how much the “special relationship” suffered in the absence of effective intelligence sharing, in spite of the formation of a security alliance. The British took specific policy positions based on their own special intelligence while alienating the United States from that intelligence and their intentions. The result was an unexpected and awkward British confrontation with overt American disapproval.

The Suez Crisis was precipitated by Egyptian President Nasser’s announcement that the Suez Canal was to be nationalized. The United Kingdom, in concert with France and Israel, took military action in order to prevent the nationalization of the canal and to keep the key waterway open to Western commerce. The Crisis was exacerbated by the fact that, while America was fully aware of Britain’s frustration with Nasser’s decision, the British deliberately did not inform Washington of their intentions to take military action against Egypt. The United Kingdom counted on American support, in part due to the historical alliance and the “special relationship,” but also because of Nasser’s pro-communist rhetoric and diplomatic recognition of communist China. The degradation of the “special relationship” was reflected in Washington’s

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<sup>58</sup> “The North Atlantic Treaty.” North Atlantic Treaty Organization. April 4, 1949. <http://www.nato.int/docu/basic/txt/treaty.htm> (accessed November 6, 2008).

infamous rejection of Britain's power play; instead, the United States took diplomatic, economic, and even military measures to prevent the success of the invasion. The Crisis marked what Baylis called "the post-war nadir in Anglo-American relations."<sup>59</sup> This relational trough was directly precipitated by Britain's unwillingness to share with the United States the intelligence underlying their policy positions. The failure induced by lack of intelligence exchange was disastrous and denoted what Dimpleby and Reynolds referred to as "the worst rift of the twentieth century between Britain and America."<sup>60</sup>

Counterfactually, it is difficult to say with certainty what *would* have happened had the British disclosed their Suez intentions to the United States prior to taking military action. Based on the outcome of the events, however, if the British had made their operational intentions known to the United States in advance, the Americans would likely have made clear their probable response: diplomatic abandonment, public international condemnation of the action, and an economic bombshell amounting to a run on the British pound. With these reactions in mind, the British may have reconsidered taking military action to re-take the Suez, instead pursuing ensured access to the Canal through other means while maintaining solidarity with the United States. The importance of the lack of intelligence sharing in aggravating the Suez Crisis cannot be overstated, and had intelligence been shared, the Crisis would likely have been averted.

While the British were still reeling from the American actions during the Suez Crisis, the Soviet Union launched their first satellite "Sputnik" into space. The success of Sputnik forced the United States to acknowledge the possibility that the Soviet Union was technologically far superior and could pose a direct threat to the U.S. homeland. No longer could the Americans continue to operate under the delusion that they could confront the Soviet threat alone. Taken in tandem with the Suez Crisis, Sputnik prompted the Eisenhower administration to recognize the need to re-establish the "special relationship." Eisenhower began by revisiting the McMahon Act and sharing nuclear technology, acknowledging the importance of intelligence cooperation to the success of the "special relationship." Additionally, the United States began forward

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<sup>59</sup> Baylis (1984), 73.

<sup>60</sup> Dimpleby and Reynolds, 218.

staging Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles in the United Kingdom, and assisted the British in configuring their bombers to carry American air-launched nuclear missiles. The result of these revitalization efforts was the 1958 Anglo-American Mutual Defense Agreement, which repealed the McMahon Act and took positive action to share nuclear-related secrets between the United States and the United Kingdom. According to Baylis, the successes enjoyed by the “special relationship” from 1958 through the end of the Cold War can all be traced back to the passage of the Agreement, with its codicils reconciling the nuclear aspects of intelligence relationship broken by the McMahon Act.<sup>61</sup> The Agreement officially recognized the indispensable role of intelligence sharing to the crucial security aspect of the “special relationship.”

*d. Intelligence Sharing Persisted Due to Common Threat*

Despite American hesitancy to share its own nuclear intelligence with its British partners, despite the broken trust of spy infiltration, and despite British withholding of operational intelligence and intentions during this period of friction, the close Anglo-American intelligence sharing relationship continued and flourished in other areas, specifically with regard to the Soviet nuclear threat. Baylis describes “the continuation of intelligence collaboration to assess Soviet atomic developments” as a key element of continuity and stability through the early years of the Cold War. This indicates that the shared view of the threat posed by the mutual Soviet enemy formed the impetus to share information on that threat, in the face of barriers to sharing intelligence in other venues.

Ironically, the first official codification of the “special relationship” occurred within the context of the British-American standoff on nuclear technology. Both countries signed a then-Top Secret document on May 6, 1950 entitled “Agreed Anglo-American Report: Continued Consultation on and Coordination of Policy.” The report laid out shared American and British objectives and responsibilities in thwarting the spread of communism throughout the world, resolving that in order to address the issue properly, “there should be continuous consultation and close co-ordination of policy

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<sup>61</sup> Baylis (2008).

between them.”<sup>62</sup> It was as if both British and American leaders were covertly demonstrating the resiliency of the intelligence aspect of partnership in spite of overt post-war political strife. The overarching and mutual threat posed by the Soviet Union demanded such cooperation.

In spite of the political angst generated in the wake of American nationalistic policies, the classified Report acknowledged both the pre-existence and the critical importance of the close working relationship: “It is of course recognised [sic] that the development of closer consultation with other like-minded Governments is desirable, and that opportunity should be taken to develop the practice, which already takes place in a wide field.”<sup>63</sup> As this document spelled out, in many ways the “special relationship” which existed between the United States and the United Kingdom during the Cold War was, despite the political hiccups in the late 1940s and early 1950s, merely a continuation of the alliance established during World War I and fostered and solidified during World War II. Particularly the military and intelligence apparatus which had been so formidable on the Western Front transferred and adapted to face the rising threat posed by expansionist Soviet Communism.

The ability of the United States and the United Kingdom to share intelligence regarding the Soviet threat in spite of political anxiety and lack of sharing and agreement in other areas bears this out. For instance, the initial flights of the American U-2 reconnaissance aircraft in the 1950s were based out of the United Kingdom, and “the U.S Air Force and the Royal Air Force shared the results of slant photography along the borders of the Soviet Union (and probably also the products of their occasional accidentally or purposeful penetrations of Soviet air space).”<sup>64</sup> Repeatedly throughout the Cold War, political disagreements arose which threatened the vitality of the “special relationship.” Britain’s lack of support for American action in Vietnam in

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<sup>62</sup> “Agreed Anglo-American Report: Continued Consultation on and Coordination of Policy.” *Documents on British Policy Overseas*. Vol. 2. Issue 2. May 6, 1950. 243.

<sup>63</sup> “Agreed Anglo-American Report,” 243.

<sup>64</sup> Ernest R. May and Gregory F. Treverton. “Defence Relationships: American Perspectives,” in *The ‘Special Relationship’: Anglo-American Relations Since 1945*. Edited by WM. Roger Louis and Hedley Bull. Clarendon Press. Oxford. 1986. 169.



the 1960s and Grenada in 1983 are just two other examples of such political speed bumps during which intelligence continued to flow freely in both directions with regard to the Soviet Union.<sup>65</sup> The fact that the British and Americans continued to share intelligence on the Soviet threat throughout this time period demonstrates again that the need to share outweighed whatever hesitancy existed due to political conflict. In many ways intelligence exchange provided continuity through the crises which enabled reconciliation when the dust settled.

Again, counterfactually it would be difficult to assess with any degree of certainty what would have occurred in the Cold War had the United States and the United Kingdom not shared intelligence on the Soviet threat. Ernest May and Gregory Treverton allude to the pooling of American and British intelligence resources out of necessity, asserting that both countries “faced lean times” in addition to a common enemy during the Cold War years.<sup>66</sup> It appears that the intelligence agencies in the United States and Britain realized at the time the dire consequences of not sharing intelligence: that the Soviet Union would have the upper hand in terms of intelligence capability and resources; that the Soviets would be able to plan, operate, and maneuver with reduced chance of detection; and that the Western security position would be weak and vulnerable. Conversely, by sharing intelligence, the United States and the United Kingdom complemented each other’s strengths, supplemented each other’s weaknesses, and continued to solidify the relationship forged in the fires of two World Wars. This intelligence collaboration enhanced bilateral security cooperation, which countered the Soviet threat, enabled victory in the Cold War, and ensured the primacy of the “special relationship” into the next millennium.

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<sup>65</sup> John Dumbrell. “The US-UK ‘Special Relationship’ in a World Twice Reformed.” *Cambridge review of international affairs*. Volume 17. Number 3. October 2004. 438.

<sup>66</sup> May and Treverton, 168.

## **E. INTELLIGENCE SHARING HAS KEPT THE “SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP” SPECIAL**

The “special relationship” from World War I, to World War II, and throughout the overarching Cold War was marked by consistent agreement between the United States and the United Kingdom on the nature of the enemy and the threat he posed both to each country individually and to the West collectively. That is not to say that the Anglo-American relationship was without its political friction; rather, intelligence sharing both reflects and fosters a common threat view. The development and maintenance of this common threat view through intelligence sharing has been and continues to be the critical element in the security aspect of the “special relationship,” in spite of political strain.

Intelligence sharing did not win or lose World War I by itself, but the British disclosure of the Zimmermann telegram to President Wilson was integral in prompting American entry into the war and in providing the genesis for the “special relationship.” World War II was decided on the battlefields, on the high seas, and in the open skies, but Anglo-American intelligence collaboration proved, as General Eisenhower labeled it, “decisive” in enabling the Allied victory and critical in giving depth and substance to the burgeoning “special relationship.” The Cold War was won by superior economic strength, superior policies, and superior leadership, but Anglo-American intelligence exchange permitted continuity in the partnership, maintained a shared focus on the Soviet nuclear threat, and ultimately provided the basis for the deterrent whereby the Soviet Union and the Communist Bloc imploded. Intelligence sharing did not prevent Anglo-American political disagreements regarding access to nuclear technology, nor did it prevent political anxiety during the Suez Crisis and other such debacles, and it suffered serious setbacks due to the revelations about Kim Philby and his spy ring. Intelligence exchange did provide a measure of stability through these political crises, which ensured that the relationship would eventually be restored to its rightful “special” place.

The triad formed by common culture, economic interdependence, and security cooperation has created an Anglo-American partnership which is, to this point in history, a unique relationship between sovereign nations. While no pillar stands alone, the security aspect of the relationship distinguishes the Anglo-American relationship as truly “special.” Because of its vital role in the foundation of the Anglo-American security relationship, because of its history of success, because of the trust required in order to ensure the continuation of that success in the long term, and because of its ability to endure and to thrive in spite of political anxiety, intelligence exchange between the United States and the United Kingdom has demonstrated its critical value in setting apart the “special relationship” as special.

While the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the “special relationship” formed, solidified, and strengthened through the contributions of Anglo-American intelligence sharing, events at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century put the “special relationship” to the test and shine the spotlight on intelligence as both the problem and the solution for emergent crises. In Chapter III, this thesis examines the impact of the September 11, 2001 tragedy on intelligence, discusses the influence of intelligence on the public justification for the American decision to pursue military action against Saddam Hussein’s regime and the British decision to support American action, and assesses the role Anglo-American intelligence sharing played in affirming those decisions.

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### III. ANGLO-AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE SHARING IN THE PRESENT-DAY “SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP”

Intelligence sharing has been shown to comprise a critical element in the history of the Anglo-American “special relationship,” but how has intelligence exchange manifested itself in more recent events? This chapter examines the current state of the U.S.-UK intelligence sharing relationship in the context of the ongoing Iraq war by answering the question: did intelligence influence the American decision to pursue war against the regime of Saddam Hussein and the British decision to support American action in Iraq, and if so, what impact did the exchange of intelligence between the United States and the United Kingdom have on those decisions? This chapter argues that, despite *ex post facto* statements to the contrary, both President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair based their decisions solidly on the analysis of their respective intelligence communities. Furthermore, this chapter argues that intelligence shared between the United States and the United Kingdom not only had a direct bearing on the analytical conclusions which led the two countries toward military action in Iraq, but also provided the confirmation needed to justify military action to both domestic and international audiences. This chapter concludes that, because of the conditions of intelligence exchange which led to the Iraq war, Anglo-American intelligence is now unified as never before and scrutinized as never before.

To place the “special relationship” in the context of the present day, however, requires defining “present day” as the period of time which has followed September 11, 2001. 9/11 was a seminal event in the history of the United States and in the history of the world. Its effects are still being felt and will likely continue to be felt into the foreseeable future. As it bears on this discussion, the greatest impact of the 9/11 attacks was that they drastically altered the way Britain and America defined a threat. No longer was the definition of what constituted a “threat” restricted to entities with the *capability and intent* to do harm to the United States and its allies, but rather it was expanded substantially after 9/11 to include those entities with the *intention to seek the capability* to harm the America and its foreign partners. In his 2003 State of the Union Address,

President Bush spelled out the reasoning of this altered threat perception, characterizing “rogue” states which possessed or pursued WMD as implicitly more dangerous than even the terrorist organizations themselves:

Today, the gravest danger in the war on terror, the gravest danger facing America and the world, is outlaw regimes that seek and possess nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. These regimes could use such weapons for blackmail, terror, and mass murder. They could also give or sell those weapons to terrorist allies, who would use them without the least hesitation.<sup>67</sup>

If any country met the criteria of this altered threat definition, it was Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. Saddam’s support for terror had been well-publicized. Between September 2000 and March 2003, Saddam’s regime had donated approximately \$35 million (U.S.) to the families of Palestinian militants killed in conflict with Israelis, with a \$25,000 going to the family of each suicide bomber.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, while foreign and domestic analysts varied on how best to deal with Iraqi WMD, few openly doubted the assessments of the American intelligence community stating that Saddam possessed and was pursuing WMD. Within the U.S. Intelligence Community, only the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) offered anything resembling a dissenting opinion to the October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate’s conclusions, and even that dissent was couched in ambivalence, “neither endorsing nor opposing” the conclusion that Saddam Hussein was harboring WMD.<sup>69</sup> Additionally, virtually every major foreign intelligence agency concurred with the assessment that Saddam possessed WMD, including those of the United Kingdom, Germany, Russia, China, Israel, and France.<sup>70</sup> As Lowenthal states, “The fall 2002 debate at the UN was over the best way to

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<sup>67</sup> George W. Bush. “2003 State of the Union Address.” January 28, 2003. U.S. Capitol. Washington, DC. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html> (accessed October 16, 2008).

<sup>68</sup> “Palestinians Get Saddam Funds.” BBC News. March 13, 2003. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/2846365.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2846365.stm) (accessed November 10, 2008).

<sup>69</sup> Betts, 603.

<sup>70</sup> Norman Podhoretz. “Who is Lying About Iraq?” *Commentary*. December 2005. Volume 120. Number 5. 28.

determine if [Saddam Hussein] possessed these weapons and how best to get rid of them, not over whether or not Iraq had them.”<sup>71</sup> By all counts, Iraq fit President Bush’s new threat threshold.

Two vital questions emerge from this post-9/11 change in threat perception: did intelligence influence the ultimate decision of the United States and the United Kingdom to pursue military action against Saddam Hussein’s regime in March 2003, and if so, what impact did the *sharing* of intelligence between America and Britain have on those decisions?

#### **A. DID INTELLIGENCE INFLUENCE THE DECISION TO GO TO WAR IN IRAQ?**

The answer to the above question might seem to be an obvious and resounding yes. In his 2003 State of the Union Address, President Bush listed several data points in support of his allegation that Iraq possessed WMD, citing American intelligence as the source:

Our intelligence officials estimate that Saddam Hussein had the materials to produce as much as 500 tons of sarin, mustard and VX nerve agent. In such quantities, these chemical agents could also kill untold thousands... U.S. intelligence indicates that Saddam Hussein had upwards of 30,000 munitions capable of delivering chemical agents. Inspectors recently turned up 16 of them – despite Iraq’s recent declaration denying their existence.<sup>72</sup>

The next month, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell addressed the United Nations in an effort to garner international support for militarily enforcing the UN Security Council Resolution demanding that Saddam Hussein disarm Iraq’s WMD. Powell had been instrumental in convincing President Bush of the need to “go the extra mile with the UN”<sup>73</sup> and made it clear that he would not have been comfortable pursuing military action without the intelligence to justify it. Powell played for the council

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<sup>71</sup> Lowenthal, 27.

<sup>72</sup> Bush, “2003 State of the Union Address.”

<sup>73</sup> George Tenet with Bill Harlow. *At the center of the storm: My years at the CIA*. Harper Perennial. April 2008. 319.

numerous audio recordings, electronically intercepted phone calls, and voice transmissions on which America had based its conclusion that Saddam possessed and was attempting to conceal WMD. He also cited a number of human sources which confirmed the suspicion that Iraq's WMD program was being hidden from UN inspectors. He displayed several satellite photos showing the purported movement of WMD-related vehicles and personnel, noting that the timing of such movement relative to the arrival of UN weapons inspectors led to the conclusion that evidence of WMD was being concealed. Powell declared plainly that all of the statements he was making to the council were "backed up by sources, solid sources. These are not assertions. What we're giving you are facts and conclusions *based on solid intelligence*."74

However, after it became clear that Saddam Hussein's WMD program was nowhere near as prolific as either British or American intelligence had assessed it to be prior to the war, President Bush and Prime Minister Blair each stated independently that he would have pursued military action against Saddam Hussein even knowing the truth about Iraq's lack of WMD. According to Richard Betts, "If we are to believe President Bush, mistaken intelligence did not cause his decision for war, because he had other reasons for wanting to destroy the Saddam Hussein regime. Bush later claimed that he would have launched the war even if he had known that Iraq did not have WMD."75 Robert Jervis makes a similar claim:

President George W. Bush has been forthright in his affirmation that he would have proceeded anyway [knowing that Iraq lacked WMD], arguing that Saddam wanted WMD, especially nuclear weapons, and that sanctions and inspections could at best have slowed him down. Furthermore, Saddam was a tyrant and so there was a great danger that he would make enormous trouble once he had them. Previously acceptable risks were too great to run in the post-9/11 world.76

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74 "Transcript of Powell's U.N. Presentation." CNN. February 5, 2003. <http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/02/05/sprj.iq.powell.transcript/> (accessed October 8, 2008). Emphasis added.

75 Richard K. Betts. "Two Faces of Intelligence Failure: September 11 and Iraq's Missing WMD." *Political Science Quarterly*. Volume 122, Number 4. 2007-8. 598.

76 Robert Jervis. "Reports, Politics, and Intelligence Failures: The Case of Iraq." *Journal of Strategic Studies*. Volume 29. Number 1. 7.



Prime Minister Blair made remarkably parallel claims that he would have proceeded in the same manner, regardless of the intelligence assessments. A BBC News report states, “With ‘hindsight,’ Mr. Blair told [Members of Parliament], the case against Saddam Hussein would probably have been made in a different way, with separate reports from the [Joint Intelligence Committee] and the government, but the end result would have been the same.” The report quotes Blair making unrepentant assertions strikingly similar to those of President Bush: “I cannot honestly say I believe getting rid of Saddam was a mistake at all. Iraq, the region, the wider world is a better and safer place without Saddam.”<sup>77</sup>

Despite these statements after the fact, both Bush and Blair clearly based their decisions to pursue military action in Iraq on intelligence. Two separate pieces of evidence affirm this. First, great pains were taken to utilize intelligence to make the case for military action in both domestic and international forums. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz stated that the reason the Iraqi WMD intelligence was put at the forefront of the public case for war was that it was “the one issue that everyone could agree on.”<sup>78</sup> As Betts states, “The presumed existence of [WMD], however, was the only reason that the [Bush] administration could secure public support to make the war politically feasible. Had Bush presented the case for war in 2002 as he did a few years later, denying that neutralizing WMD was a necessary condition, no one but fanatics would have lined up behind him.”<sup>79</sup> As Herman summarized, “Intelligence has been the public justification of a pre-emptive war.”<sup>80</sup>

Second, if the Bush and Blair administrations had not based their decisions on intelligence, then there would have been no need to conduct extensive, formal investigations of the intelligence failures prior to the war. According to Jervis, “intelligence informs policy. The fact that only those countries that supported the war

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<sup>77</sup> “‘Serious Flaws’ in Iraq Intelligence.” BBC News. July 14, 2004.  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/politics/3890961.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/3890961.stm) (access October 8, 2008).

<sup>78</sup> “Deputy Secretary Paul Wolfowitz Interview with Sam Tannenhaus, Vanity Fair.” May 9, 2003.  
<http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=2594> (accessed November 6, 2008).

<sup>79</sup> Betts, 598.

<sup>80</sup> Herman. “Intelligence’s Future.” 2.

held investigations is consistent with this view..., and most of the investigations imply a link between intelligence and policy. They almost have to: if there were none, why bother with the investigation?”<sup>81</sup>

Thus, intelligence absolutely influenced the Bush administration’s decision to pursue military action against Saddam Hussein and Blair’s decision to support military action. But the question remains: to what extent did the exchange of intelligence between the United States and the United Kingdom impact these decisions?

## **B. THE EFFECT OF ANGLO-AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE EXCHANGE ON THE PURSUIT OF WAR**

While primary evidence of specific intelligence shared between the United States and the United Kingdom in the lead-up to war in Iraq remains classified and compartmented, accurate conclusions about the impact of such exchanges can be drawn from unclassified secondary sources. This section examines standing Anglo-American intelligence agreements, the extensive use of UN weapons inspectors’ reports by both British and American analysts, and statements by British and American public officials acknowledging the influence of shared data on their respective intelligence analyses and subsequent policy decisions.

### **1. Independent Assessments Made on the Basis of Common Intelligence**

Two main problems arise in attempting to determine the influence of intelligence sharing on American and British pre-war decisions. First, standing intelligence agreements and routine business practices render some segments of intelligence common to both countries. Second, a substantial portion of the intelligence upon which the pre-war decisions were made was derived from reports of UN weapons inspectors, which were also common to both countries.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Jervis, 6.

<sup>82</sup> Lawrence J. Lamanna. “Documenting the Differences between British and American Intelligence Reports.” *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*. Volume 20. Number 4. 2007. 609.

*a. Anglo-American Intelligence Agreements*

So much intelligence is routinely exchanged between Britain and America that it becomes difficult to distinguish between what has been shared and what has been withheld. This is especially true with regard to standing agreements pertaining to signals intelligence (SIGINT) and imagery intelligence (IMINT).

The United States and the United Kingdom began the regular practice of sharing SIGINT products during World War II and formally adopted the exchange of SIGINT as a standard business practice under the UKUSA Agreement in 1947.<sup>83</sup> In conjunction with other Anglosphere nations (Canada, Australia, and New Zealand), the United States and United Kingdom officially divided the responsibility for collecting and disseminating SIGINT within the Anglosphere. This division of responsibility is indicative not only of an ongoing *exchange* of intelligence, but also of the fact that the intelligence was and continues to be *common* to all five partners in the Anglosphere. Per this agreement, the transfer of SIGINT between the United States and the United Kingdom is so seamless as to be nearly transparent. This agreement remains in effect to the present day, meaning that British and American intelligence analysts undoubtedly had access to one another's SIGINT in assessing Iraqi WMD.

Similarly, the United States regularly shares IMINT within the Anglosphere. The U.S. National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), America's administrative lead organization for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of imagery, readily admits having an intimate imagery sharing relationship with the United Kingdom. According to NGA's unclassified website, "we openly acknowledge that we routinely share imagery of common concern with the governments of Australia, Canada,

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<sup>83</sup> Jeffrey T. Richelson and Desmond Ball. *The Ties That Bind: Intelligence Cooperation between the UKUSA Countries – the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand*. Allen & Unwin. Boston. 1985. 2.

and Great Britain.”<sup>84</sup> Again, because this practice remains valid, the American and British intelligence services were probably working from the same imagery in analyzing the Iraqi WMD problem set in the lead-up to war.

It is safe to deduce that, based on standing agreements and routine sharing practices, the UK intelligence apparatus at a minimum had access to, and in some cases was likely the source of, much of the intelligence that Colin Powell presented to the United Nations on February 5, 2003. At the very least, the SIGINT and IMINT data presented by Powell were, in all likelihood, common to both British and American intelligence analysts.

***b. Reports of UN Weapons Inspectors***

Unlike SIGINT and IMINT, indigenous human intelligence (HUMINT) sources were lacking in building the case for war in Iraq. One reason for this, according to Robert Jervis, “was that the US and UK relied heavily on UN inspections in the years when they were in place and never developed substitutes when they were withdrawn.”<sup>85</sup> The evidence of this is clear in both British and American investigations after no WMD was found in Iraq. In his assessment of the investigation reports, Lawrence Lamanna concluded, “both the UK and U.S. had relied heavily on information from the UN inspection teams for a period of time, and were thus getting the same information.”<sup>86</sup>

Essentially, British and American intelligence analysts had common access to and made extensive use of the same intelligence data. In examining the investigation reports, *there is no evidence of Anglo-American collusion on the analysis of this shared data*, only strong evidence that each country’s intelligence services based their conclusions on largely common intelligence data, including routinely-shared SIGINT and IMINT sources, as well as the UN inspection teams’ reports.

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<sup>84</sup> “Historical Imagery Declassification.” National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency. <http://www.nga.mil/portal/site/nga01/index.jsp?epi-content=GENERIC&itemID=5b08f8d62404af00VgnVCMserver23727a95RCRD&beanID=1629630080&viewID=FAQ#12> (accessed October 20, 2008).

<sup>85</sup> Jervis, 13.

<sup>86</sup> Lamanna, 609.

## 2. Public Statements Affirming Anglo-American Intelligence Linkage

Beyond the evidence that shows British and American intelligence analysts were operating from essentially the same intelligence base, several statements by public officials confirm that sources were shared and utilized in forming conclusions about Iraqi WMD. President Bush referenced British intelligence in his 2003 State of the Union: “The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa.”<sup>87</sup> Colin Powell also made reference to British intelligence in his presentation to the United Nations: “I would call my colleagues attention to the fine paper that the United Kingdom distributed yesterday, which describes in exquisite detail Iraqi deception activities.”<sup>88</sup> That both referenced British reports proved false in the final analysis does not diminish the facts that American analysts had access to the reports, that they had presented the reports to policymakers in support of their argument against Saddam Hussein, and that those policymakers had, in turn, utilized the reports to make the case for war in Iraq to both domestic and international audiences.

British officials also offered public statements affirming that intelligence shared between the United States and United Kingdom mutually impacted policy. According to Herman, “The British representative on the [UN] Security Council was reported to say in March (2003) that the failure to reach agreement was because France, Germany and Russia were not working off the same intelligence base as the UK and US.”<sup>89</sup> Implicit in this statement is the idea that the United States and the United Kingdom *were indeed* operating off a common intelligence base, and that it was the common intelligence base which convinced the British and American administrations that war was a necessary means to achieve the end of an Iraq free of WMD.

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<sup>87</sup> Bush, “2003 State of the Union Address.”

<sup>88</sup> “Transcript of Powell’s U.N. Presentation.”

<sup>89</sup> Herman. “Intelligence’s Future.” 5-6.

### **C. THE CONFIRMING EFFECT OF INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENTS**

While intelligence analysts in both the United States and the United Kingdom were operating from the same intelligence base to draw their conclusions about Iraqi WMD, there is no evidence to suggest that American analysts were cooperating with their British counterparts, and vice-versa, in conducting analysis of the common intelligence data. Both the *Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community's Prewar Intelligence Assessments in Iraq* from the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and its British counterpart, *the Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction*, noted extensive use of the same intelligence data, but neither report made any reference to Anglo-American collaboration in analyzing that data. While absence of evidence is not necessarily evidence of absence, each investigation would likely have been eager to distribute culpability had it been warranted, yet neither did. In other words, each country's intelligence apparatus came to the same conclusion about Iraqi WMD independently, even though based off the same intelligence data.

The fact that American and British intelligence services had arrived at the same conclusions independently served to validate those conclusions. While Blair was unable to avoid popular characterizations of himself in the international media as President Bush's lap dog, he was able to claim honestly that his intelligence apparatus had reached its own independent conclusions about Saddam Hussein's WMD, which enabled him to justify to the British public his support for American military action in Iraq. Similarly, with British confirmation, the United States was able to shrug off objections to war from other states in Europe and the Middle East, claiming that neither military action nor the intelligence which supported it was unilateral.

### **D. CONCLUSION**

The "special relationship" manifested itself once again in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the unwavering support Great Britain offered the United States in pursuing the GWOT and military action to induce regime change in Iraq. The American decision to go to war against the regime of Saddam Hussein and the British decision to support American action in Iraq came as a direct result of shared intelligence and analysis. Pre-

war intelligence sharing between the United States and the United Kingdom caused both countries to arrive at the same, independent conclusions about Iraqi WMD and had a confirming effect which served to validate the decision of each to seek or support regime change in Iraq. The result has been distinct global loss of confidence in the Anglo-American intelligence establishment, which has contributed to the political quandary in which Britain finds itself today (this quandary is the subject of Chapter IV).

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## **IV. THE BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE OF ANGLO-AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE SHARING**

The future of intelligence sharing and the Anglo-American “special relationship” is inextricably linked to a critical decision facing the administrators of Great Britain’s foreign policy. In recent decades, the United Kingdom has used its “special relationship” with the United States and its increasing importance in Europe to act as a transatlantic “bridge.” Yet many policy analysts now claim that the United Kingdom must choose a primary foreign allegiance, either America or Europe. This chapter discusses the reasons the British are facing this foreign policy dilemma, examines the ramifications of the decision on Anglo-American intelligence sharing, and applies the decision to potential threats the U.S.-UK alliance may face in the future. This chapter argues that for both the United States and the United Kingdom, the intelligence sharing relationship would be better preserved by a continuation of the standing British policy than by an overt bias towards either the United States or Europe.

### **A. THE BACKGROUND OF BRITAIN’S FOREIGN POLICY DILEMMA**

World War II marked the end of the preeminence of British global power. The War left the United Kingdom in unfamiliar circumstances: short on money and manpower, steeped in debt, and dependent on a stronger foreign ally. As the world polarized into its Cold War camps and Europe emerged as the main Cold War battleground, Great Britain leveraged its unique position between the United States and Europe. Successive British Prime Ministers starting with Harold Macmillan in the 1950s leveraged the strength of the U.S.-UK relationship to increase British influence in Europe, while using Britain’s powerful position in Europe to gain clout in Washington. As such, the United Kingdom became the conduit through which Europe understood American Cold War policy and through which America exercised that policy in Europe. Particularly since UK accession to the European Union in 1973, British governments have, according to Kristin Archick, “sought to balance British interests between

Washington and Brussels.”<sup>90</sup> By doing so, the British have performed a delicate balancing act which William Wallace calls “essential to the maintenance of British influence and prestige.”<sup>91</sup>

As the Cold War ended, the British sought to sustain their influence over the world’s remaining superpower. With the reunification of Germany and the expansion of the European Union, Europe remained a central focus of U.S. foreign policy, if not to the extent that it was during the Cold War. With this altered but continued American focus on Europe, the United Kingdom redoubled its efforts to secure its position as the Euro-American bridge. After winning election as the British Prime Minister in 1997, Tony Blair succinctly summarized British foreign policy, stating that it should be

strong in Europe and strong with the U.S. There is no choice between the two. Stronger with one means stronger with the other. Our aim should be to deepen our relationship with the U.S. at all levels. We are the bridge between the U.S. and Europe. Let us use it.<sup>92</sup>

The events of September 11, 2001 prompted the world to stand together in solidarity with the United States. The leading daily newspapers in France and Italy proclaimed the same words: “We Are All Americans.”<sup>93</sup> Yet, when the Bush administration sought international support to expand the Global War on Terror to Iraq, the international community was divided, with many previously supportive nations standing squarely in opposition to the United States. Britain’s support, though, was so unwaveringly solid that many in Europe, including some prominent leaders, labeled Prime Minister Blair “Bush’s Poodle.”<sup>94</sup> This pervasive view of the solidarity of Anglo-American relations has actually become, to a large extent, detrimental to the effectiveness

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<sup>90</sup> Kristin Archick. “The United Kingdom: Issues for the United States.” Congressional Research Service. September 23, 2005. RL33105. 8.

<sup>91</sup> William Wallace. “The Collapse of British Foreign Policy.” *International Affairs*. Volume 82. Issue 1. 2005. 53.

<sup>92</sup> Wallace, 55.

<sup>93</sup> Giovanna Dell’Orto. “‘We are all Americans’: A Historical Perspective on the Evolution of Discourses of America in Western European Newspapers Before and After September 11, 2001.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, San Diego, CA, May 27, 2003. [http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p111784\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p111784_index.html) (accessed September 23, 2008).

<sup>94</sup> Peter Riddell. *Hug Them Close: Blair, Clinton, Bush and the ‘Special Relationship.’* Politico’s Publishing. 2003. 3.

of the “special relationship” within the international community, especially with the lack of discovery of the alleged WMD in Iraq. Because the British and American intelligence communities had come to the same erroneous conclusion about Iraqi WMD and because the British and American policies favored pursuing and perpetuating the war in Iraq even when it became clear that no WMD would be found, many in the international community began to view the United States and the United Kingdom as a single, inseparable unit.

The Iraq War has prompted many in Europe to call for the United Kingdom to make a choice between the United States and Europe. The Europeans recognize the importance of Great Britain and its significance to the future of the European Union. The United Kingdom maintains a powerful voice in the international community as a permanent voting member of the UN Security Council. The British military is one of only two national military forces within the European Union capable of independent global operations (the other is France). The United Kingdom also has the third largest GDP in the European Union, behind only France and Germany, totaling 14.2% of the EU-27’s total GDP.<sup>95</sup> Over 50% of British trade is with other EU members<sup>96</sup>, making Britain an indispensable source of EU wealth. From the European perspective, it is easy to recognize the integral role of the United Kingdom as a key player in a rising European Union. Many within the European Union balk at the seeming inseparability of the United States and United Kingdom, or even the continuation of Britain having a “special relationship” outside the European Union.

Even within the United Kingdom, a groundswell of support toward greater integration with mainland Europe has been building. According to Archick, “some UK foreign policy impulses are closer to those of its EU partners than to those of the United States. For example, like several of its other EU partners, Britain places great emphasis

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<sup>95</sup> According to Eurostat, “Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices,” the United Kingdom had a GDP of approximately €1.2 trillion for 2007, while the EU-27 GDP was approximately €12.9 trillion. September 23, 2008.  
[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?\\_pageid=1090,30070682,1090\\_33076576&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1090,30070682,1090_33076576&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL) (accessed September 24, 2008).

<sup>96</sup> Archick, 13.

on multilateral institutions as a means for managing international crises and legitimizing the use of force.”<sup>97</sup> Transatlantic Trends 2008 confirms the European leanings of the British in many areas, particularly in dealing with the United States. In rating their feelings about the United States, for instance, Britons were only slightly ahead of the European average.<sup>98</sup> In spite of these European leanings, however, the Transatlantic Trends 2008 survey found that United Kingdom maintains security views which are much more in tune with those of the United States than other European nations. For example, when asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement “Under some conditions, war is necessary to obtain justice,” 75% of the Americans surveyed either agreed somewhat or agreed strongly, as did 62% of Britons; the highest percentage from another European country was 38% from the Netherlands, with Europeans on average agreeing 28% of the time.<sup>99</sup> Additionally, British sentiment is significantly more in line with American thinking than the prevailing European attitude toward NATO. When asked to what extent all NATO member countries should contribute troops if NATO decided to take military action, 82% of British respondents and the same percentage of Americans either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed; the European average was 57%. Thus, while in some policy areas, the United Kingdom may lean toward Europe, when it comes to security matters, the British still align more strongly with Americans than Europeans.

Calls for an Atlanticist or Europeanist decision from the United Kingdom have not been limited to frustrated European partners; many in Washington wish to see Britain make its allegiance known as well. According to Wallace and Oliver:

In the months after the invasion of Iraq, the British government attempted to rebuild relations with the French and German governments, above all on closer cooperation in defense. The depth of suspicion in Washington of French motives, however, and especially resistance within the US

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<sup>97</sup> Archick, 8.

<sup>98</sup> Data 2008.” Transatlantic Trends 2008. [http://www.transatlantictrends.org/trends/doc/2008\\_English\\_Top.pdf](http://www.transatlantictrends.org/trends/doc/2008_English_Top.pdf) (accessed October 20, 2008). 11. When asked to rate their feelings about a given country on a scale of 0-100, with 100 being very warm and favorable, and 0 being very cold and unfavorable, the UK rating was 56, where the overall European average was 52.

<sup>99</sup> Data 2008.” Transatlantic Trends 2008. 61.

Department of Defense to any modification of NATO's dominant role in European security, suggested that there were many in Washington who wanted Britain to choose between its transatlantic and European links rather than to balance between them.<sup>100</sup>

The American attitude toward the British function as the transatlantic bridge has been, to borrow an assessment from Jolyon Howorth, a bit "schizophrenic."<sup>101</sup> On the one hand, American administrations throughout the Cold War urged the United Kingdom toward accelerated integration into the European Community and indeed supported the idea of a generally integrated Europe. According to Geir Lundestad, this support for European integration prevailed for five main reasons: first, European integration was viewed as being woven in the same cloth as American-style federalism; second, the belief that an integrated Europe would be more rational and more efficient; third, that a unified Europe would reduce the security burden on the United States; fourth, that consolidating Europe would promote the mutual goal of containing Soviet expansionism; and fifth, that an integrated Europe which embraced a unified Germany would serve as a check on resurgent German power, which had proven extremely volatile twice already in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>102</sup>

On the other hand, U.S. presidents beginning with Richard Nixon, while maintaining support for European integration in general, started to promote confederate rather than federal arrangements, because they began to see that "in promoting an integrated Europe, Washington might actually push its best friends in Europe away."<sup>103</sup> The Anglo-American "special relationship" was one prominent reason for this shift, as Nixon and Henry Kissinger feared that a supranational Europe would necessarily mean a weaker Anglo-American partnership. The British "were following the American lead rather closely, but if their policies were to be submerged in a European community, the

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<sup>100</sup> Wallace and Oliver, 153.

<sup>101</sup> Jolyon Howorth. *The Security and Defense Policy in the European Union*. Palgrave Macmillan. August 21, 2007. 137. While Howorth was describing American attitudes toward the European Security and Defense Policy, the use of the word "schizophrenic" to describe American approaches to Europe originates with him, hence the citation.

<sup>102</sup> Lundestad, 13. Also, John Dumbrell. *A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations in the Cold War and After*. St. Martin's Press, LLC. New York. 2001. 177-178.

<sup>103</sup> Lundestad, 103.

result could easily be greater distance from the United States.”<sup>104</sup> The same fear expressed by Nixon and Kissinger, that British integration into the European Union would weaken the Anglo-American “special relationship,” remain valid into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Many policy analysts, particularly within the United Kingdom, have argued that a black-and-white United States or Europe decision is artificial; however, the concerns about such a decision on both sides of the Atlantic are very real. The ramifications of Britain’s choice would fundamentally alter the “special relationship.” The effects would be felt in virtually all policy areas, everything from economics to security policy, from human rights to climate change. However, in no area would the impact of such a decision be more deeply felt than in Anglo-American intelligence sharing.

## **B. THE IMPACT OF A UK DECISION ON INTELLIGENCE SHARING**

Much can be deduced about the impacts of a UK decision on intelligence sharing. While a British decision may not pose a clear and present danger, it certainly poses an ambiguous and potential danger which could jeopardize the intelligence collaboration relationship that is the cornerstone of the Anglo-American alliance. Intelligence sharing relationships are steeped in trust. As a direct result, valuable intelligence sharing agreements tend to be bilateral, instead of multilateral. Intelligence shared with just one other country is expected to remain in the confidence of that country. However, secrets shared in a multilateral intelligence organization become the common knowledge of all the member organizations. For this very reason, Britain’s decision has tremendous bearing on the bilateral U.S.-UK intelligence sharing relationship.

If the United Kingdom chooses to ally itself primarily with Europe, the excellent partnership Britain has with the United States would most assuredly be severely damaged. A closer UK-EU relationship would likely diminish the ability of the U.S. intelligence community to continue trusting the United Kingdom with its most intimate secrets. The terror attack on the Madrid rail system on March 11, 2004 “prompted calls for the creation of a European Union Intelligence Service comparable to the Central

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<sup>104</sup> Lundestad, 103.

Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the United States.”<sup>105</sup> John M. Nomikos claims that one of the biggest obstacles to intelligence integration of this nature within the European Union is “the fear of spoiling privileged relationships,” particularly with the United States.<sup>106</sup> Multilateral intelligence exchange agreements among EU member states would virtually eliminate the ability of American intelligence analysts to trust British analysts with information regarding other EU member states, as, according to Nomikos, “[intelligence] organizations... tend to view international relations as a zero-sum game.” This means that as intelligence cooperation between the United Kingdom and Europe increases, trust between the United States and Britain decreases. Ongoing efforts in support of a European Security and Defense Policy will indubitably require a policy to coordinate intelligence sharing efforts among EU member states as well as an overarching organization to facilitate that intelligence exchange, since, as previous chapters have demonstrated, intelligence sharing is the critical component to successful security cooperation. A closer UK-EU relationship would likely cause American analysts to hesitate to share intelligence with a British partner who might divulge those secrets to an EU partner with whom the United States would not ordinarily share intelligence.

Conversely, if the United Kingdom declared the primacy of the Anglo-American relationship above its European partnership, the effectiveness of the U.S.-UK intelligence cooperation would still be diminished. As was mentioned previously regarding the case of Iraqi WMD, a tight-knit Anglo-American intelligence community might begin to be seen as a single entity, rather than two independent organizations, to the detriment of both. The Anglo-American intelligence sharing relationship is so successful today in large part because American and British intelligence agencies are able to use each other as relatively unbiased, independent confirmation on a variety of intelligence subjects of interest to both countries. While the issue of Iraqi WMD exposed the weakness of the U.S.-UK intelligence cooperation effort in that both countries’ agencies turned out to be

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<sup>105</sup> John Nomikos. “A European Union Intelligence Service for Confronting Terrorism.” *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*. Volume 18. Number 2. 191-2.

<sup>106</sup> John Nomikos. “The European Union’s Proposed Intelligence Service.” Power and Interest News Report. June 17, 2005. [http://www.pinr.com/report.php?ac=view\\_report&report\\_id=316&language\\_id=1](http://www.pinr.com/report.php?ac=view_report&report_id=316&language_id=1) (accessed September 24, 2008).

wrong, it also revealed the potential strength of two well-respected, independent intelligence organizations each validating the conclusions of the other. If the United Kingdom were to draw closer to the United States and away from its European partnership, the two agencies would begin to be viewed as one by outside observers, diminishing the weight of that independent confirmation and reducing the overall effectiveness of the intelligence partnership.

Despite calls among Europeans for an “us or them”-type decision from the United Kingdom, a third option remains viable: maintaining the status quo. Furthermore, as it pertains to intelligence exchange, it is in the best interests of both the United Kingdom and the United States for the British to continue on its present, centrist course. For the British, maintaining the current balance permits ongoing privileged access to American intelligence sources and methods, while leaving the door open to agreements with other European nations. It even gives the United Kingdom a powerful bargaining position in the formulation of multilateral, intra-European intelligence sharing policies. For the United States, having Britain with its top-notch intelligence community as a close ally but with the ability to conduct analysis in parallel for comparison and validation is vital. As much as former Prime Minister Blair might have wanted to claim that a decision did not exist, the British today face just such a decision. A middle-of-the-road approach, however, provides a third alternative which would benefit both the United States and the United Kingdom, particularly as it regards intelligence cooperation.

The middle-of-the-road policy enables a measured distance to develop between the United States and the United Kingdom which permits independent thinking and policymaking to occur while simultaneously nurturing the intelligence sharing partnership. Economic policies, treaties, culture, social policies, views on climate change, international trade, even weapons development and the use of military force can all be independent without changing the ongoing effort to strengthen the trust necessary for even greater intelligence sharing between the two countries. Maintaining this measured distance ensures that when America and Britain do stand together, it is not merely the result of an indistinguishable closeness, rather it is the result of two autonomous powers arriving at the same conclusion separately and pursuing a mutual



solution together. This separation in world perception is necessary to enhance the effectiveness of the “special relationship,” which has been so badly damaged by the perception of the too close proximity evidenced in the Iraq war.

### **C. APPLYING THE BRITISH DECISION TO FUTURE THREATS**

The key aspect of the Anglo-American intelligence sharing relationship is the ability to use the intelligence exchange to collaborate on threats of mutual concern to both countries, to bring consensus on the nature of those threats, and to facilitate agreement on the best courses of action to deal with those threats. The U.S.-UK alliance faces four current or emergent threats in the near future, and the established British “bridge” policy makes the Anglo-American intelligence team ideally suited to handle each of them.

The first is the ongoing threat posed by Islamic extremism. Combating the transnational nature of Islamic fundamentalist terrorist organizations, such as Al Qaida, requires international cooperation. Since September 11, 2001, the Anglo-American intelligence apparatus has proven quite effective in collaborating on this mutual threat. One well-publicized example of this effectiveness was the thwarted transatlantic airline plot in August 2006. Terrorists planned to detonate aircraft originating from London’s Heathrow Airport and heading toward the United States and Canada. In a statement shortly after the plot was revealed and suspects were arrested, Prime Minister Blair credited Anglo-American collaboration for averting the disaster: “There has been an enormous amount of co-operation with the U.S. authorities which has been of great value and underlines the threat we face and our determination to counter it.”<sup>107</sup> A strong Anglo-American intelligence sharing relationship is critical to thwarting attacks of this nature in the future.

The second threat is that posed by a resurgent Russia. As seen recently in Georgia, Russia maintains a concerted desire to re-exert its influence on the former Soviet Republics. Having dealt with the Russian/Soviet threat for decades, the

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<sup>107</sup> BBC News. “‘Airlines terror plot’ disrupted.” August 10, 2006.  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/4778575.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4778575.stm) (accessed September 25, 2008).

capabilities and the mentality of the Russians are, to a certain degree, known quantities. The United Kingdom is in a unique position, however, being more geo-politically aligned with many of the former Soviet Republics, to provide indications and warning of Russian activities. This is especially true in the Baltic states, where Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania now operate as full members of the European Union alongside Britain. Anglo-American intelligence is key in anticipating and preventing Russian resurgence.

The third threat facing the Anglo-American alliance is China. Unlike Russia, China is a relatively unknown quantity. China boasts the world's largest population, a surging economy, and a massive and capable armed force equipped with a nuclear arsenal. In the international spotlight leading to the 2008 Beijing Olympics, China was on its best behavior. Now that the Beijing Olympics are past, the question remains whether China will continue to make peaceful strides or flex its potent military muscle in the region. With former colonies in the region, including Hong Kong, the United Kingdom has both greater experience in dealing with the Chinese than the United States and presumably assets in place to assess Chinese intentions.

The fourth mutual threat facing the United States and United Kingdom comes from renegade nations, such as North Korea and Iran. Renegade nations pose a tremendous risk to both Britain and America in that they are relatively unpredictable. Where Russia is a known quantity and China is a rational actor, renegade countries are less predictable. The strength of the Anglo-American alliance will be critical in preventing surprises from these renegade nations, particularly from those countries which possess or are actively seeking to obtain or develop WMD.

#### **D. EFFECTIVENESS CONTINGENT ON CLOSE BUT MEASURED DISTANCE**

Ironically, the "special relationship" is contingent on maintaining a measured distance between the United States and the United Kingdom. If the partnership were too close, the two countries run the risk of becoming indistinguishable in the international community, which marginalizes the relationship's powerful worldwide influence; if the United States and the United Kingdom are too far apart, or if the United Kingdom

becomes closer to the European Union than to America, the relationship risks losing its “special” quality. Only at a close, but measured distance is the relationship both special and powerful. John Dumbrell summarized the need, from the British perspective, for measured distance succinctly: “If the 1956 Suez crisis demonstrated the folly attaching to excessive defiance of the United States, 2003 may come to be seen as exemplifying the hazards of excessive public obedience.”<sup>108</sup>

Ultimately, Britain should make every effort to continue to function as the bridge between the United States and Europe. As Archick concludes, “Preserving the UK’s position as a strong U.S. ally and leading EU partner provides UK foreign policy with maximum flexibility to promote its diverse interests in Europe and beyond. Consequently, the UK will continue to seek close ties with both the United States and the EU for the foreseeable future.”<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> John Dumbrell. “The US-UK ‘Special Relationship’ in a World Twice Reformed.” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*. Volume 17. Number 3. October 2004. 449.

<sup>109</sup> Archick, ii.

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## V. CONCLUSION

Intelligence sharing is vital in shaping the Anglo-American “special relationship.” Intelligence exchange is the defining characteristic of security cooperation, which is itself the most important feature of the “special relationship.” The special nature of the Anglo-American partnership began with intelligence sharing, which ushered in American entry into World War I. The U.S.-UK intelligence relationship directly enabled victory in World War II, and provided stability and continuity throughout the Cold War.

If the history of the Anglo-American “special relationship” is riddled with examples of the critical nature of intelligence sharing, so too is the modern world witness to the power of shared American and British intelligence. While September 11, 2001 changed the way Americans and Britons view threats and the onus of intelligence to detect and deter those threats, the tragic events of that date once again sealed the “special relationship” in blood. Americans drew strength from the “special relationship” in that season of trial, and built on the foundation of shared intelligence to pursue those responsible for the massacre and those perceived to be seeking to duplicate or surpass it. Shared intelligence led directly to the American decision to pursue military action in Iraq and the British decision to support that action.

The reputation of Anglo-American intelligence has suffered in the mutual failure in assessing Iraqi WMD. Pressure from other European nations has put Great Britain in a political quandary, seemingly forcing the British to choose between Europe and the United States in declaring its primary allegiance. The ramifications of a British decision of this nature on intelligence sharing would be extreme. The most beneficial course of action, both for the United Kingdom and for the United States, would be to continue the “special relationship” at a close but measured distance. This approach would best enable the British to join America in an international effort to thwart rising threats, while avoiding the perception of Britain and America as a single, inseparable entity.

As the “special relationship” is critical to the perpetuation of liberal ideals espoused by the United States and the United Kingdom, so too is intelligence sharing vital to the perpetuation of the “special relationship.”

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